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Quality Assurance in Transnational Education

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Quality Assurance in Transnational Education

Robert Morris Williams

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Business Administration

University of Bath

School of Management

April 2018

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Abstract

This study discusses the purpose, process and practice of quality assurance in transnational education (TNE) wherein institutions in one country award their degrees to students studying in another. This arrangement raises the issue of how the quality and standards of the degree programmes are assured so that they enable the programmes delivered in one country to be considered as being of a comparable quality and standard to those delivered in another.

The study explores how the cross-national implementation of quality assurance is conducted and perceived by those engaged in it and the challenges such activity faces.

Using data collected via structured interviews in Sri Lanka and the UK, the study examines the perceptions of participants in TNE collaboration.

The analysis is undertaken within a conceptual framework developed from inter-firm relationship and supply chain management theories. The concept of “relational capital”, and its creation through socialisation activity, is proposed as a key factor in understanding TNE. A further body of literature is explored, that of inter-cultural communication and inter-cultural competence.

The study contributes to the literature on TNE and internationalisation by identifying a tension between the financial drivers behind TNE and the resource intensive activities required to build relational capital. The findings are developed into a conceptual model for quality assurance in TNE, which can be used in the planning, management and evaluation of TNE and is designed to develop relational capital through the relational and inter-cultural competences of those engaged in such work. Through such a development, it is argued, quality assurance in TNE can move away from a process of enforced compliance with the prevailing quality assurance processes to one driven by a shared quality culture in which capacity building in the partner institutions of TNE can be achieved.

Key Words: transnational education, quality assurance, relational capital, inter-cultural communication, inter-cultural competence.

Chapter 1 Introduction and context

1.1 Introduction

The subject of this investigation is the *practice and process of quality assurance in transnational education* (TNE). TNE refers to a development in higher education (HE) wherein institutions in one country award their degrees to students studying in another. In almost all cases this arrangement is between an institution in a country where the Anglo-American university model, as Marginson describes it (2006), is dominant, particularly in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, and one in a non-English-speaking country, mainly in Asia.

This arrangement requires the institution awarding the degree to assure the quality and standards of the provision in the offshore location, which raises the issue of how this quality assurance process is undertaken. As this process is dependent on people and their understanding of its purpose and practice, the nature of relationships between the staff of the institutions with this responsibility is a primary concern.

This thesis argues that TNE is intrinsically an inter-cultural phenomenon with the potential for misunderstandings and contested meanings. It explores the understanding and perceptions of staff in three institutions engaged in TNE, and develops an argument that places the concept of relational capital, built through socialisation, at the heart of effective quality assurance in TNE. Through the development of relational capital, shared meanings, essential for achieving quality assurance in TNE, can be developed and maintained. In addition, the argument is further developed to include the importance of both relational and inter-cultural competences in those staff. The thesis presents a relational and competence model which will aid the framing and development of future quality assurance processes in TNE.

This subject is at the heart of my own professional practice in international partnership work in my institution where I hold the job title, Director, International Partnerships, in the Faculty of Environment and Technology, at the University of the West of England (UWE). Within a single institution, with a single approach to the quality assurance process with its collaborative provision, I have experienced a wide range of quality assurance concerns, with multiple factors, concerning the practice of individuals at both my institution and at the partner institution. This has driven my interest in understanding what it is about quality assurance in TNE that makes it so problematic for all the parties involved.

I am therefore actively engaged in TNE work, and I am also, as a British white male in a senior academic role, a person from the dominant colonial period culture in pre-independence Sri Lanka, where the work and research is focused. The TNE work, and this research, was conducted in a post-colonial context for HE in Sri Lanka, and the research reveals dynamics to TNE, with regard to this, which have considerable implications for the management of quality assurance.

The epistemic perspective developed in the research, and elaborated further in Chapter 3, is one in which concepts such as quality assurance can only be understood in any context as a

construct created, shared and made sense of through language and interaction. I conducted the research in my own work place with people who know me and, as a consequence, the potential impact of my role was taken into account in the research design and the presentation of the findings and their discussion.

Through adopting a qualitative, interpretative and reflexive approach and through data collection in one-to-one interviews, I seek to understand how people in institutions in the UK and in Sri Lanka experience, understand and make sense of both TNE itself and the quality assurance process it requires. In discussing the findings of the research, the implications for the conduct of TNE that might empower and build capacity in the host institution and society are examined.

1.2 Globalisation and internationalisation in higher education

The globalisation and internationalisation of HE provide the macroscopic context for this research. While the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably, two different phenomena are distinguished.

Globalisation in HE refers to the wider ‘economic, technological and scientific trends that directly affect higher education and are largely inevitable in the contemporary world’ (Altbach, 2006, p. 123). This increasingly integrated world economy is impacting on academic institutions and HE in many different ways (Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley, 2010).

Globalisation as a process is forming a global dimension of HE, distinct from local and national dimensions. Marginson (2011) chooses not to apply a pre-given theorisation to globalisation itself, but to draw on a ‘plurality of insights’ and to focus on what may be empirically verifiable, such as practices, structures, capacity and flows (2011, p. 11). Marginson and van der Wende (2007) seek a neutral definition of globalisation, ‘free of ideological baggage’, as ‘a geo-spacial process of growing inter-dependence and convergence in which worldwide or pan-regional spheres of action are enhanced’ (p. 8).

Marginson and van der Wende (2007) use the term ‘global dimension of higher education’ to indicate both the globalisation process, and the activities of national governments, institutions and people within that global dimension. In 2002 Marginson and Rhoades argued that globalisation processes in HE were under-studied and under-theorised. In their article they propose a ‘glonacal agency heuristic’, by which they suggest the need to understand the simultaneous significance of global, national and local dimensions and forces. They argue the need to consider ‘nationally and locally embedded layers and structures that ... lead to varying patterns of national and local adaptation and resistance’ (2002, p. 299). This glonacal conceptualisation – global + national + local – has since been developed, and used, by Marginson and van der Wende (2007; Marginson, 2011) to develop a framework to help understand the relationship between the local institution, national culture, polity, laws, policies and regulations, including quality assurance frameworks and agencies, which shape HE and research in a country, and the global dimension.

Marginson and van der Wende (2007) argue that the global dimension of HE itself is formed through human activity, usually within international, national and HE institutions (HEIs) through their 'practical strategising', and the cross-border relationships, patterns and flows of knowledge, people and technologies they establish. They quote Scott (1998) in explaining the impact of globalisation – 'not all universities are (particularly) international, but all are subject to the same processes of globalisation – partly as objects, victims even, of these processes, but partly as subjects, or key agents of globalisation' (Scott, 1998, cited in Marginson and van der Wende, 2007, p. 5). Since Scott wrote those words in 1998, the processes of globalisation have further changed the global dimension of HE, and HEIs themselves are far more likely to actively engage with that dimension than to be subject to it. As Jane Knight puts it, 'internationalization is transforming the world of HE and globalization is changing the world of internationalization' (2008, p. 1).

Internationalisation may therefore be distinguished from globalisation as activities undertaken by governments, academic systems and institutions, and even individual departments to deal with globalisation (Altbach, 2006). A key distinction between the two concepts is that of control. While globalisation and its impacts are beyond the control of any one actor or set of actors, internationalisation can be seen as the specific policies, programmes and strategy for governments and institutions to respond to the demands being made of them by globalisation (Altbach et al., 2010). Individual HEIs therefore respond to globalisation by taking steps, amongst which are the many activities that fall under the umbrella term 'internationalisation'. These might be efforts to 'internationalise' the curricula, market and recruit internationally, establish research consortia and, for some, the development of TNE initiatives.

The phenomenon of internationalisation in HE has many dimensions but two main manifestations. First is the emergence of an international market in HE, which sees student mobility across national borders. In this dimension we see students moving across international borders to study, and individual institutions and national governments seeking to attract them (Knight, 2005, 2006).

Second, and the focus of this research, is what has become widely known as 'transnational education' and by the acronym TNE. In contrast to student mobility, TNE is explained as programme mobility, the 'cross-border mobility of programmes across national jurisdictional borders' (Knight, 2005, p. 16). The term 'transnational education' is sometimes referred to by synonymous terms such as 'cross-border', 'offshore' or 'borderless' education (British Council, 2013, p.12).

1.3 The Scope of Transnational Education

The general principle of TNE is that students can study towards a foreign qualification without leaving their home country. Providers and programmes cross-national borders, rather than the individual student. For instance, it is now possible for a student at a college in Asia to study for, and receive, a degree from a UK university without leaving their home country. The British Council, in their report on the state of TNE, *The Shape of Things to Come* (2013),

provides an account of various attempts to define TNE and adopts the 2002 Council of Europe definition, namely:

All types of higher education study programmes, or sets of courses of study, or educational services (including those of distance education) in which learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based. (British Council, 2013, p. 12)

TNE is implemented through a variety of models and enacted, on the one hand, through HEIs with degree-awarding powers in one country and, on the other, through colleges and institutions in another country where the students study. There is no established vocabulary to describe the parties to these relations. For the purpose of this study I adopt the language of the British Council in describing the former as ‘sender’ or ‘sending’ institution(s), in as much as their programme is delivered elsewhere. I describe the latter as ‘host’, both in terms of the institution delivering the provision, and the country where the study is located (British Council, 2013).

TNE has continued to grow, with the UK, US and Australian universities at the forefront of ‘sender’ provision. In the UK the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) reported that for UK HEIs in 2014/15, 663,915 students were studying wholly overseas compared to 598,925 in 2012/13 (HESA, 2016).

The following figure and two tables illustrate the scale and scope of that development from a UK perspective.

2008/09 Ranking	2012/13 Ranking	2014/15 Ranking	Country
3	 2	 1	Malaysia
1	 1	 2	Singapore
2	 1	 3	Hong Kong
4	 4	 4	China
9	 4	 5	Oman
15	 6	 3	Egypt
16	 6	 3	Sri Lanka
5	 2	 1	Greece
14	 8	 3	United Arab Emirates
11	 3	 4	India

Table 1.1 UK HE TNE countries 2014/15 (excludes BSc Applied Accounting through Oxford Brookes University/ACCA (HEGlobal, 2016, p. 26)

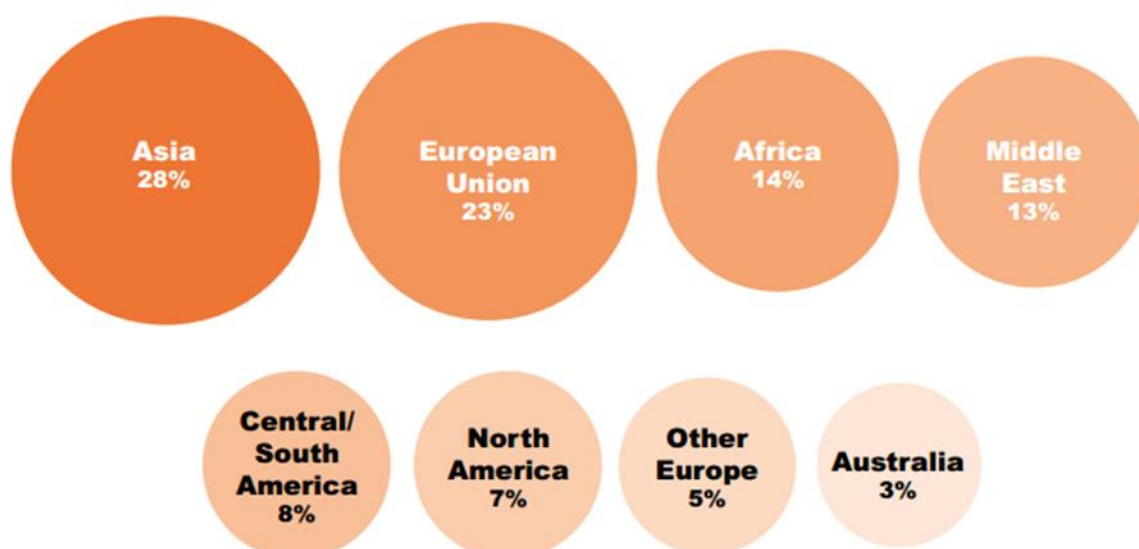


Figure 1.1 UK HE TNE by region – percentage of TNE programmes delivered in the regions 2014/15 (HEGlobal, 2016, p. 32)

Host Country	UK HEIs Delivering TNE	No of Programmes Delivered by all UK HEIs in the country
Singapore	21	205
Malaysia	16	178
Greece	9	127
Hong Kong	14	120
United States	4	120
Canada	4	105
China	16	92
Germany	10	92
Nigeria	3	87
India	9	82
Sri Lanka	6	74
Trinidad and Tobago	4	68
South Africa	4	62
Oman	8	57
Australia	3	53
Dubai	9	50
France	1	50
Switzerland	4	48
United Arab Emirates	5	45
Ireland	6	42

Table 1.2 Representation of UK HEIs and programmes by host country 2014/15 (HEGlobal, 2016, p. 32)

1.4 Quality assurance in transnational education

In all models of TNE, a critical concern is the quality and standards of the educational programmes delivered in the host country. In the UK, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) is clear, when setting out the key principles for collaborative provision in its *Quality Code for Higher Education*, that: ‘the degree-awarding body has ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, regardless of where these opportunities are delivered and who provides them’ (QAA, 2013, B10, p. 6).

With this requirement, institutions engaged in managing HE provision with others must implement ‘robust’ procedures to ensure collaborative arrangements are effectively managed and overseen by the awarding body. These are designed to mitigate the risks of such provision and protect the interests of all students, ‘regardless of where they are studying or whether they are full-time, part-time, undergraduate or postgraduate students’ (QAA, 2013, B10, p.2).

It is this requirement to implement and conduct quality assurance procedures, in order to ensure the standards and quality of the provision irrespective of the location for delivery, that represents a key challenge for the institutions engaged in TNE, and which is the focus of this study.

Meeting this challenge requires a process of negotiation and agreement between the participating institutions regarding the process of quality assurance to be implemented and conducted, with the expectation of complete compliance. It involves a wide range of involvement from both academic and non-academic staff at participating institutions, and their engagement in the process through guidelines, staff development, procedures and the practice of quality assurance. It is this challenge, and how it is met within individual institutions, that the research examines.

Brown (2004), in discussing the purpose of quality assurance, distinguishes between a purpose focused on accountability – in the sense of compliance with standards and rules – and a focus on improvement secured through constructive and professional dialogue. The former approach is often seen as one in which quality is an emergent property of a well-developed and implemented process. In other words, compliance with the process leads to ‘quality’, or that quality is the outcome of a process carried out to plan. The risk, as I observe, is that the process, without the constructive dialogue, can lead to box-ticking in which the completion of each step of the process is the priority, and the efforts of staff are focused on compliance with the rules. In such a mode, people may simply do what they are told to do, and do it to a level necessary to tick the box but without necessarily understanding the values behind the process. Such a position may mean that the motivation to engage with quality assurance is just to complete the process. It is of interest, then, for TNE projects, to ask how the constructive and professional dialogue recommended by Brown can be conducted across many miles and across cultures.

The problematic potential of quality assurance in TNE was highlighted in 2011 when the University of Wales, who at the time was running validated programmes at over 100 colleges

in more than 40 countries, with a total number of ‘offshore’ students in excess of 70,000, announced it was going to close down its overseas business. This followed a series of critical reports by the QAA and two undercover investigations by the BBC (BBC, 2011; Times Higher Education, 2012).

According to a recent report, ‘quality assurance and accreditation are two of the most hotly debated topics in TNE’ (British Council and DAAD, 2014, p. 33). This is due in part to the growing volume of TNE provision and in part to the reported concerns regarding the robustness of the quality assurance systems. Altbach and colleagues (2010) suggest that ‘quality assurance in HE has risen to the top of the policy agenda in many nations’, leading to ‘enormous challenges for establishing appropriate standards or benchmarks that can be compared from one institution to another and from one country to another’ (2010, p. 63).

1.5 Research Aim and Question

The aim of this investigation is to examine the cross-national implementation of quality assurance in TNE, with the focus at the institutional level, that is, the sender institution making the award and the host institution delivering the provision. While this provision is clearly ‘collaborative’ in that it requires two institutions working together, the research investigates the nature of the collaboration, how quality assurance is understood from both perspectives, and how the practice of cross-national quality assurance is conducted.

The focus here is on TNE within a single country - Sri Lanka - and between one UK institution and two Sri Lankan ones. The decision to select Sri Lanka as the location for the case investigation is based on planned growth in TNE in the country (Senaratne, 2012; UNESCO, 2007; University Grants Commission and Ministry of Higher Education, Sri Lanka, 2012). Sri Lanka is also selected for the pragmatic reason that I work for a UK awarding institution with TNE provision in Sri Lanka and visit the country as part of my ongoing work.

The research question is:

How is transnational education (TNE) and its processes of quality assurance understood and enacted within the institutions engaged in the provision?

This question assumes that the conduct of quality assurance is critical to delivering confidence in the quality and standards of the programmes delivered. It also assumes that implementing a quality code devised in one country in an institution in another country is more than a technical implementation in which procedures are simply followed.

Quality assurance in the UK is described as the system ‘designed to secure the quality of teaching and the standard of awards in higher education institutions’ (HEFCE, 2014). In TNE it is by following the guidelines and processes established within its own quality assurance system that an awarding institution (sender) ensures that the quality and standards of the provision and award at the delivering institution (host) are equivalent to that delivered at the awarding institution in their home country. At one level this would appear to be a managerial task. The sender institution establishes a set of guidelines, with further guidance from the

QAA, which they consider to represent a set of processes and practice which, if carried out, will assure the quality and standards of the provision at the providing institution. The problematic nature of quality assurance in TNE is, however, experienced in an environment where guidelines, procedures and process are established by sender institutions and where host institutions are required to follow those imported guidelines through the conduct of their staff. What might be the factors that influence the outcomes of the quality assurance process? An understanding of the quality assurance process at the institutional level and of the relationships between, and understanding of, those vested in both institutions to deliver the provision is required to answer this.

The implementation of quality assurance in TNE requires an approach that recognises the interplay of social, economic and political dimensions that influence the beliefs, values, perspectives and actions of the stakeholders who enact the process at the institutional level. It also requires a theoretical framework to make sense of how those dimensions might be aligned and to understand their impact on the quality management process.

1.6 Research focus

The focus of this research is at the institutional level where the programmes are awarded and delivered and where institution staff carry out quality assurance. Secondary questions explored here focus on this individual institution level, and are as follows:

- How is quality assurance perceived, understood and conducted in both the sending (awarding) institution and the host (receiving) institution in TNE provision?
- What are the key factors in the relationships between and within the participating institutions that influence the conduct and outcomes of the quality assurance process as perceived by those conducting the quality assurance?
- How might understanding the way the quality assurance process is understood and experienced enable institutions engaged in TNE to achieve the goals of quality assurance?

The research explores the understandings held of the quality assurance process, its legitimacy and its purpose by those staff enacting the process at both sender and host institution. It prompts exploration of the extent to which there are agreements between the parties as to the importance of the quality assurance process and its components. It explores with individuals in the UK and Sri Lanka the values, priorities, key activities, compliance with requirements, rigour, completion of documentation and attitudes held regarding both the process and its oversight and management. The extent to which the quality assurance policies and practices are understood and identified with by local staff and whether they are perceived as shared or externally imposed is explored. In order to investigate these secondary questions, it is important to investigate the quality assurance process from the perspective of the individuals in the two partner institutions enacting the process. By seeking understanding of the implementation of quality assurance in TNE at an institutional level, the extent to which there is, or can be, a shared 'quality culture' within and across the institutions will be investigated.

In doing so, it will be important to investigate the power dimensions of quality assurance within and between organisations and with regard to quality assurance as a processes of management control.

1.7 Literature sources

A number of bodies of literature are drawn on to develop the research design and to enable a discussion of the findings of the research.

First, the literature review examines the scope and growth in TNE, particularly from the perspective of HEIs in the UK, in order to understand the scale of both TNE provision itself and the drivers behind it. This literature also enables an understanding of the nature of the perceived issues in quality assurance in TNE.

Second, the literature review investigates studies of quality assurance in TNE. Amongst this body of literature are studies that argue that quality assurance in HE is deeply affected by power relations (Morley, 2003), and these and their impacts may be more acutely significant in a post-colonial context such as Sri Lanka. Critical management theory will be drawn on to distinguish a 'bureaucratic' approach to managerial control, including quality assurance, in organisations from a 'normative' approach in which shared meanings and values create a shared culture, albeit with the same purposes of control. It is argued that a bureaucratic/compliance approach to quality assurance in which the hosting institution is required to comply with the rules and regulations of the sending institution is problematic in a post-colonial context that TNE is usually implemented into.

Third, the literature review examines frameworks and approaches developed to understand the process of quality assurance within supply chains more often associated with manufacturing. The concept of 'supply chain quality management' (SCQM) has, in recent research, developed an orientation towards the inter-organisational supply chain and the relationships between the component parts of supply chains.

Frameworks and concepts from this body of literature include supply chain integration (Yeung, 2008), relational capital and socialisation (Cousins et al., 2006) and supply management alignment (Handfield et al., 2015). This literature offers many insights into how we might frame and understand TNE as being primarily about the dynamics of inter-organisational relationships rather than an extension of the regulations, procedures and control of one organisation (sender) over another (host) with a requirement of compliance.

The concept of relational capital and its creation is explored, as it is argued that this is particularly pertinent in TNE. Relational capital is value that is created and maintained by having, nurturing and managing good relationships (Still, et al., 2013). The value is generated in an exchange relationship between firms 'that cannot be generated by either firm in isolation' (Liu et al, 2010, p. 238). Cousins and colleagues argue that relational capital, is a key contributor to the success of quality chain management and is created through processes of socialisation (Cousins, et al., 2006). The nature of communication between the staff of both institutions is explored in this research, with regard to this process of socialisation, and

developed through the proposition that all TNE is inter-cultural. It is argued that the interaction of individuals across cultures cannot assume any shared meaning.

A fourth body of literature, inter-cultural communication theory, is explored, due to its concerns with behaviours when members of two or more cultures interact (Gudykunst, 2000, quoted in Otten et al., 2009). It is concerned with the interaction and relationship between meaning, language and beliefs, values and attitudes, and, in the literature, the idea has arisen that there is such a skill-set as ‘inter-cultural communicative competence’ in which individuals can become more skilled in their inter-cultural communications.

Using the key concepts from this literature, the research explores how communication in the quality assurance process is conducted between staff in both participating institutions. The research brings together this literature to explore whether inter-cultural communication competence might be an important component in the socialisation processes leading to the development of relational capital.

Finally, in developing the research design, ‘cultural imperialism’ (Tomlinson, 1991) and post-colonial theory (Tikly and Bond, 2013) are discourses that provide perspectives on inter-organisation work and research across borders, specifically between the developed ‘North’ and the developing ‘South’, between which many TNE projects are located and with which this research is engaged. The research method is developed later, in Chapter 3, in order to seek an insight into the attitudes and practices of those enacting the quality assurance process, and how they interpret and understand effective implementation of quality assurance in TNE.

Post-colonial theory evolved mainly in the humanities, and globalisation theory in the social sciences, and there has been a convergence in their discourse in recent years (Krishnaswamy and Hawley, 2008). Post-colonial theory is interested in the cultural effects of colonialism on the ‘post-colonial condition’ in order to legitimise social practices, of which quality assurance might be considered typical. In particular, locating the research in Sri Lanka, with its former colonial status with regard to the UK, raises questions about the influence and impact of the former colonial country on HE and the practice of quality assurance. In such a context, despite the sharing of a colonial past and the development of a HE system within the post-colonial era, it would be unwise to assume shared meanings will exist as to the purpose and benefits of TNE, and of such social practices as quality assurance.

1.8 Conceptual frame of reference

The literature review is used to develop a framework to examine quality assurance in TNE and the key dimensions to understanding quality assurance in TNE are derived from the literature review.

The framework allows an exploration into whether current processes for conducting quality assurance in TNE may lead to ‘perhaps more compliance than continual improvement’ (British Council and DAAD, 2014, p. 33), which the British Council and Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (DAAD) regard as a risk if understanding of, and commitment to, quality assurance is not shared and embraced.

First, the development of TNE as a phenomenon, is an important feature of internationalisation in HE. A working premise for this thesis is that the drivers, benefits and concerns related to TNE discussed in the literature do not make the outcome, for any individual case of TNE, predictable. The institutions and individuals have agency and are able to consider the goals, issues, practices and choices in the implementation of their projects.

Second, quality assurance is a key element of national HE systems and of TNE provision. Quality assurance is presented as a system of control. This thesis presents the case that this (quality) control can be exercised through rules and regulations by which compliance with those rules and regulations are demanded and enforced through the application of power. In TNE, often implemented within post-colonial, cross-cultural environments, and within local HE systems which may be facing internal challenges, TNE and quality assurance may be a sensitive issue. The thesis argues that the understandings and meanings attributed by people to quality assurance processes will influence how they engage with that process. It is argued that demands for compliance without shared understanding and meaning will be problematic for the goals of quality assurance in TNE. A shared quality culture with shared meanings can create a 'normative' system of control, in which people are intrinsically motivated to carry out quality assurance processes, as distinct from a 'bureaucratic' approach to quality assurance in which a requirement to follow rules and procedure predominates under threat of enforcement.

The third dimension of the framework is that of a concept from inter-firm organisational discourse, relational capital, which, this thesis argues, is central to the development of shared meanings and understandings. The development of relational capital requires socialisation through face to face meetings which are costly in the context of TNE.

It is argued that institutional approaches to face-to-face socialisation in TNE will be influenced by how the institutions perceive quality assurance. Socialisation, and the building of relational capital, may not be perceived as an important priority by either party if their perspective on quality assurance is the requirement of the hosting institution to comply with the rules, regulations and procedures of the sending institution. The thesis develops an argument, from the research findings, that TNE projects will benefit from developing an approach to quality assurance that develops relationships and shared understandings.

A fourth dimension to the framework is acknowledgement of the importance of the people enacting the process of quality assurance and managing the TNE project. The roles and responsibilities required to conduct the relationship (competences) and the inter-cultural and relational communication competencies of the individuals occupying those roles are distinguished as variables for institutions implementing TNE.

The conceptual framework uses relational capital and competences, inter-cultural communication competencies, organisational competences and personal competencies to examine how the goals of quality assurance in TNE might be achieved, and to provide the expected contributions of the research.

1.9 Expected contributions of the research

Drawing on these discourses, this research seeks to identify those aspects of the quality assurance process seen to be the most and least effective in creating the conditions to assure that the standards and quality of provision is appropriate and secure, and that the perceived purpose of quality assurance is achieved.

Within the wider framework, a conceptual model is developed for exploring the practice of quality assurance and improvement in TNE. Critical factors perceived to make a difference between achieving, or failing to uphold, the quality assurance process and its purpose are proposed. The research examines whether there may be a correlation between the creation of relational capital and aspects of the quality assurance process, institutional relationship and inter-cultural communications. It identifies those features of relational capital that are perceived to make a difference to the achievement of, or a failure to uphold, the quality assurance process in TNE.

Finally, recommendations are made, addressed to both the sending and hosting institutions in TNE, which can be implemented and embedded in the development and operations of quality assurance in TNE. These recommendations are practical and achievable and offered for consideration by institutions engaged in TNE.

1.10 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is organised into seven chapters, including this Introduction. The literature review in Chapter 2 examines the bodies of literature described above including TNE, quality assurance in TNE and inter-organisational SCQM. The chapter also looks at the literature on inter-cultural communication and the concept of competence in inter-cultural communication, and examines how scholars have viewed the latter as an attainable area of expertise for work across cultural boundaries. The conceptual framework that is used for the research design and data analysis is introduced at the end of this chapter.

Chapter 3 outlines the research design of the study and discusses the choice of methods and ethical considerations. It highlights the research process including the rationale behind the choice of interviewees at both sender and host institutions, and the design of the interviews. It also contains a summary of the HE and TNE provision in Sri Lanka, and the context of each institution where the interviews took place.

Chapter 4 presents the data gathered from the interviews and its analysis.

Chapter 5 presents the findings of the data analysis stage in the light of quality assurance concepts, frameworks and models, identified as potentially useful in the literature review. It establishes areas of support for the findings of previous studies, and identifies key areas of influence on the outcome of the quality assurance process.

Chapter 6 is a discussion of the implications of the findings for quality assurance in TNE. It raises issues from the findings with regard to sensitivities that require consideration in local HE contexts where both TNE and its quality assurance may be subject to political, social and

economic dynamics including the privatisation of HE and the forces of globalisation and internationalisation on national systems of HE in the developing world.

Chapter 7, the conclusion, is a discussion of the contributions that this research claims it has made to quality assurance in TNE. Drawing on the models presented in the research, this discussion is extended to consideration of how priorities, policy and practice within quality assurance in TNE might be developed, both in the institutions under investigation and in the wider context of both sender and host HEI.

Chapter 2 Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with an exploration of the phenomenon of TNE that covers its development and scale and identifies the main themes in the literature of TNE, one of which is quality assurance. The concepts of quality and standards and the objectives and process of quality assurance in TNE are discussed as a source of potential concern.

In seeking theoretical frameworks to understand the nature of quality assurance in TNE and its key variables, the literature on inter-firm relationships and supply chain quality management (SCQM) is considered. This literature identifies relational capital as an interesting concept for understanding inter-organisational relationships such as those in TNE, and points towards key factors for relationship management.

As TNE relationships are, by definition, cross-national and cross-cultural, the literature on inter-cultural communication and competence is explored with particular reference to the individuals engaged in TNE relationships. It is proposed that the literature on inter-organisational relationships and that of inter-cultural communication and competence have a synergy for TNE in that both ‘relational competence’ and ‘inter-cultural competence, amongst the individual engaged in TNE are proposed as a prerequisite to the successful implementation of quality assurance, success being the achievement of the objectives of quality assurance in TNE.

The chapter includes an examination of HE in Sri Lanka and its post-colonial context as the research.

The chapter concludes by bringing together the literature into a proposed conceptual framework for quality assurance which contributes to the research design.

2.2 Transnational education

2.2.1 Development and growth of transnational education

Jane Knight, a commentator on TNE since the 2000s (Knight, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2013, 2016) reports that Australia was one of the first countries to use the term ‘transnational education’ in the early 1990s to differentiate between international students recruited to Australian campuses and those who were studying for Australian degrees offshore. Hence, it was used to describe all offshore international student enrolments regardless of whether the offshore students were studying through twinning, franchise, distance or branch campus arrangements. Australia remains the largest provider of TNE today in terms of student volume (Knight, 2005, 2016).

Early Australian TNE development was driven by the growing demand for HE in south east Asia and by Australia's relatively close proximity to that market and the ability and appetite to address that demand (Stella, 2006). Regulatory requirements for the award of credit for the delivery of programmes at the host institution were initially addressed by having academic

staff at the awarding institution deliver the programmes and, over time, a variety of TNE models emerged that satisfied those requirements in different ways (Knight, 2005, 2006).

As an early example, Murdoch University in Perth records that it first became involved in the provision of overseas education through its Business School in Singapore in 1991 with the Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF). This was followed shortly after in Malaysia. All the initial TNE offerings were undergraduate business degree programmes delivered by lecturers from Murdoch University on a ‘fly-in-fly-out’ basis for about 12 years before becoming franchises (Murdoch University, 2018).

Knight reported in 2006, that a ‘fascinating but very complex world of cross border education is emerging’ and describes a period of rapid growth and transformation. She reports that in 2002 Australia had 97,000 students enrolled in 1,569 cross-border programmes, Hong Kong SAR had 858 degree-level programmes from 11 different countries and Singapore had 522 from 12 overseas countries (Knight, 2006).

A mark of this growth in TNE is that in 2005 UNESCO published their *Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross- Border Higher Education*. These guidelines, although non-binding, marked a milestone in the collaboration of qualification agencies globally as a response to the growth in TNE. The context was a perceived ‘education deficit’ in the receiving countries, including the need for capacity building, skill development and better quality and diversity of HE provision which, the guidelines argued, contributed to the increase in TNE. Production of the guidelines was a participative process where official representatives from 94 member states, 28 observers from member states and 22 non-governmental organisations participated with a group of experts with sector experience. A primary drive was the recognition that countries had realised that, to reap the benefits, and to avoid the risk of falling victims to low-quality provision, consumers of TNE needed protection from rogue providers and that a high level of international cooperation was therefore necessary (Stella, 2006).

From both the provider and receiver countries perspectives the guidelines found support for the following:

- transnational education can be helpful to countries if managed appropriately;
- UNESCO Guidelines are a helpful resource to countries, both sending and receiving cross border higher education (TNE);
- some quality assurance systems already have practices in place that are in line with the UNESCO Guidelines;
- cooperation among the quality assurance agencies is essential for effective quality assurance of transnational education.’ (Stella, 2006, p. 269)

The guidelines established approaches to ensuring comparability based on learning outcomes while allowing for local contextualisation and avoiding identical programmes being delivered in inappropriate contexts. The focus was on standards or outcomes ensured through processes

of assessment and quality assurance in order to result in a credential that would be considered valid both in the home and host countries (Stella, 2006). These guidelines were, in turn, translated into national guidelines in some countries, including the UK, through the activity of the Quality Assurance Agency.

TNE has continued to grow, with Australian, US and UK universities at the forefront of 'sender' provision. Indeed, the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) reported that for UK HE institutions (HEIs) in 2014/15, 663,915 students were studying wholly overseas compared to 571,010 in 2011/12 (HESA, 2014, 2016).

TNE can be delivered in a variety of ways, including the following (see also Knight, 2005, 2017, Naidoo, 2009):

- *Franchising*: a sending institution authorises a host institution to deliver its programme with no curricular input by the host institution. The qualification is awarded and quality assured by the sending institution, while the host institution has primary responsibility for delivery of the programme.
- *Validation*: a sending HEI judges that a programme developed and delivered by a host HEI is of an appropriate quality and standard to lead to a degree from the sending institution, which contributes to the quality assurance process.
- *International branch campus*: the sending HEI establishes a satellite operation in the host country, and is responsible for all aspects of recruitment, programme delivery, awarding and quality assuring the qualification. Branch campuses can be established either through wholly owned subsidiaries or via joint venture partnerships with local host country partners.
- *Virtual/distance learning*: The education provider from a source country delivers the education service to students in a host country via a communication interface (usually online), and the students self-direct the learning process.

The report *The Scale and Scope of Higher Education Transnational Education* (HEGlobal, 2016) provides a comprehensive account of the TNE that the UK delivers based on a survey of 54 HEIs. The report finds that there are only 15 countries in the world where the UK does not offer any TNE, and that four in five HEIs that commented on their future plans intend to expand their TNE provision in the period to 2020. The report concludes that there is 'great diversity to delivery models, partnerships, strategic approaches and characteristics in UK outgoing higher education TNE' (HEGlobal, 2016, p. 6).

The HEGlobal report is part of a substantial literature on TNE, much focused on scoping, describing, classifying and quantifying the phenomenon (British Council, 2007, 2013; British Council and DAAD, 2014; Connelly, Garton and Olson, 2006; Hiles, 2016; Knight, 2005, 2010, 2016; OECD, 2004). Clarification frameworks such as that of Jane Knight aim to provide an analytical tool to understand the phenomenon through the clarification of the terminology together with key variables such as which institution has responsibility for curricula development and quality assurance (Knight, 2016).

2.2.2. Transnational education as an internationalisation strategy

The transformations of globalisation, and their intersection with internationalisation activities, are manifest in a range of trends in HE. Amongst these is the growth in a global market in HE accompanied by flows in student and staff mobility and in programmes and the growth in collaborative research. Many authors have reported on, and discussed, the rapid expansion of HE globally and the process of internationalisation at institutional and nation state level (see, for example, Altbach et al., 2010; Enders, 2004; Healey, 2008; Jones and Brown 2007; King, Marginson and Naidoo, 2011; Marginson, 2004, 2006; Marginson and van der Wende, 2007; Martin and Bray, 2011; Naidoo, 2003; Ziguras, 2011). As TNE has grown, so, too, has the interest in it amongst researchers (Kosmützky and Putty, 2016; Wilkins, 2016).

TNE can be seen as a dimension of internationalisation and an example of ‘practical strategising’ at institutional level (Marginson and van der Wende, 2007). Knight (2016) finds that the scope and scale of HE providers moving across borders to offer an increasing variety of academic programmes and qualifications in overseas countries have changed dramatically (Knight, 2016). She argues that ‘there is no question that TNE is a dynamic and increasingly complex part of HE internationalization and that new trends and developments need to be carefully monitored and analysed’ (2016, p. 35).

The motivating factors behind such decision-making, and the models of TNE engaged with, will vary from institution to institution and will differ significantly depending on whether it is a sending or host country institution (Wilkins and Huisman, 2012). Other factors considered by institutional managers include legitimacy, status, institutional distance, risk taking, risk avoidance and the desire to secure new sources of revenue as well as national policy and regulatory frameworks (Wilkins and Huisman, 2012). Each institution will take their own decisions with regard to their engagement with TNE and the models they develop, if any, and the drivers will be distinct for each institution.

2.2.3 The drivers of transnational education

A major and consistent driver is student demand, and that demand is fuelled by a range of factors. First, there is the question of local capacity and unmet demand. Knight and McNamara (2015) argue that TNE has the greatest impact by providing access to HE for local students. In addition, there are reports that TNE attracts a slightly different cohort, older, with work experience, and seeking flexible delivery such as block delivery and evening and weekend teaching not available under the local education provision (British Council and DAAD, 2014; Knight and McNamara, 2015).

Second, there is the perception that TNE provides an international programme of study and is consequently more valuable for subsequent employment opportunities. Career development is therefore a main motivation (Knight and McNamara, 2015). In considering TNE in Australia, and reflecting on student demand for TNE, Chapman and Pyvis (2006) argue that the vast majority of students chose their TNE programmes primarily because they were international and would therefore contribute to the prospective identity construction of an

‘international person’. Students considered that an international education signified quality and status, would provide international exposure and outlook, was an investment in career advancement, and was a means of personal growth and development. Choosing an offshore model of education was a deliberate, informed strategy to achieve their goals and thus progress along the perceived trajectory. Of the range of meanings ascribed to the term ‘international’, foremost was the shared belief that an international education would be a ‘quality’ education. It was assumed that the quality of teaching in an international programme would be higher than in a local one (Chapman and Pyvis, 2006). There is also a motivation to improve language skills and inter-cultural competence and it may be possible for a short study abroad period to be included in the TNE provision or for a transfer to the providing institution for study (British Council and DAAD, 2014).

The UK’s QAA states that the appeal of UK TNE is that the UK is renowned globally for its HE system. It puts this down not just to the quality of teaching and research, but also because the quality assurance system of the HE sector plays a significant part in maintaining the standards and reputation of the UK as a global leader in this field (MRUK Research, 2015). The status and reputation of the awarding institutions is also a factor in student decision making (British Council and DAAD, 2014)., Fiona Crozier, Head of International for the QAA, writing in Times Higher Education about the UK's capacity to export HE, and the opportunity it offers UK universities highlighted the critical importance of quality assurance regimes and the UK’s participation in wider European and global quality authority alliances. She illustrates the point with reference to China, a major host country of UK transnational education (TNE). UK TNE in China has grown by 50 per cent in the past five years. China’s confidence in the UK HE delivered in China is due, according to Crozier, in no small part to the reliance the Chinese can place on the quality assurance of that provision. The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) has strategic partnerships with two key Chinese agencies to ensure that arrangements for quality assuring UK TNE meet their expectations. The QAA are working support the work of China’s Ministry of Education in verifying new Chinese-UK programmes, and advise UK providers on their applications to the ministry for those programmes (Crozier, 2015).

Third, is the issue of TNE affordability relative to study abroad (Knight and McNamara, 2015). As an example, the student fee for studying a UWE programme in Sri Lanka is less than a third of the international student fee in the UK, not taking into account travel and living costs. The costs of TNE programmes are, however, more expensive than local programmes which may indeed be fee-free, as they are in Sri Lanka state universities, but where places are limited. There is strong evidence that TNE meets the needs of students who are unable, for a variety of reasons, to study abroad (British Council and DAAD, 2014). In addition, those students are often able to live at home, continue in employment and live and study in their own cultural milieu (Knight and McNamara, 2015).

For both sending and receiving institutions, there is a commercial imperative. Matthews (2002), observing the early years of TNE growth in Australia, states that while it may be distasteful to the many educators working in transnational settings, TNE is a multi-billion dollar 'business' motivated as much by profits as by teaching and learning objectives.

McBurnie and Ziguras (2007) find that TNE's commercial reality, and the fact that most TNE programmes are funded by student fees, makes it one of the most consumer-driven forms of education. They suggest that TNE programmes are highly dynamic in response to unmet student demand for HE, and will be taken up where the capacity to pay exists. While mutual understanding and international cooperation in teaching and learning may feature in the rhetoric of TNE, 'it tilts towards the revenue-generation approach. It has the connotation of being a commercial activity' (Stella, 2006, p. 260). A study by the UK Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) estimated the revenue to UK HEIs from TNE to be £496 million in 2012/13 (BIS, 2014).

Lane and Kinser (2011) link the development of TNE with privatisation trends in HE. They argue that the institutions exporting their academic programmes are driven by the prospect of new revenues and additional prestige. They suggest that privatising is a matter of degree rather than a sector designation. Thus, changes in government funding in Australia, the US and UK, the three largest exporters of HE programmes, have led to a rise in entrepreneurial activity including TNE (Lane and Kinser, 2011).

In the host country, TNE initiatives are often in collaboration with private colleges that do not themselves have degree-awarding powers. Constraints in government finances are pushing governments towards hybrid public/private HE models and to the use of the private sector as a main engine of growth (Martin and Stella, 2007). It is in the latter sector that the majority of TNE provision is located as it enables institutions without core expertise and degree-awarding powers to widen their offer, and their commercial success, by offering degree programmes from UK or other foreign providers. TNE provision often operates under regulations that are distinct from state-sponsored HE, and so programmes can often be established more quickly, with provision distinct from local provision, most often taught through the medium of English. An English-speaking education and degree certificate from the host country institution is valued in itself for its perceived quality and employability prospects (Knight, 2016).

2.2.4 Transnational education, cultural imperialism and capacity building

In an analysis of the semantics associated with TNE by Kosmützky and Putty (2016) they observed that the term 'cross-border education' is tied to literature that is concerned with the traversing of existing borders such as that regarding the global trade in education, national policies on provision, regulation and governance and quality assurance frameworks. They also report on a further body of literature is tied to TNE concerned with the transcendence of various social and cultural boundaries, looking at learning and teaching practices and culture and cultural difference.

TNE can be interpreted as part of the commodification of HE as a traded service like any other in global trade agreements (Naidoo, 2007; Ziguras and McBurnie, 2008). As TNE is neither national nor provided by the state, it challenges the conception and tradition of HE being a function of the nation state. It is also less regulated than local systems (McBurnie and Ziguras, 2007). As TNE is, in the main, 'demand-absorbing' in that it caters to unmet demand for HE, is tuition fee funded and operates in a competitive marketplace, so, too, has it become

an educational product, to be harnessed in the service of economic competitiveness, both by individual students and by national governments, forcing HE systems and institutions to change their traditional identities and behaviours (Singh, 2002). The curricula themselves are said to be generic programmes produced in one country for global consumption (Ziguras, 2011).

Wilkins and Huisman (2012) argue that, as TNE flows from more developed to less developed countries it can be regarded as a new form of colonialism or ‘cultural imperialism’. The term ‘cultural imperialism’ is one that Tomlinson (1991) refers to as a ‘sort of academic shorthand’ for a range of discourses and arguments concerning how life is lived in an era where global processes are argued to be leading to a domination of local diversity and autonomy by western perspectives and models.

In terms of education, Ziguras (2008) notes that the critique of cultural imperialism in international education dates from the 1970s, and relates to the growth in a global marketplace that will harm developing countries through the imposition of a homogenous cultural and linguistic hegemony, benefiting only the developed world. For TNE, Djerassimovic (2014) notes that ‘western’ is used as a generalised qualifier by authors in the field as standing in contrast to ‘local’ (usually Asian) with regard to cultural and educational experience. For Pyvis (2011), researching educational quality in an Australian university programme delivered in partnership with a Chinese university in China, a key finding was that a home programme functioned as the single reference point for quality in the programme delivered in China. Quality in the China programme was sought through the imposition of practices and philosophies associated with the home programme, which required the suppression of local educational traditions. This approach Pyvis (2011) argues nurtures educational imperialism.

There is a critical discourse concerning the extent to which economic and political power imposes values of the West on developing societies (Djerassimovic, 2014) and the dominance of ‘Northern’ (King, et al., 2011) or ‘Anglo-American’ (Marginson, 2006) models in global HE. In TNE this discourse brings together the imposition and adoption of education and culture and the power relations between importer and exporter institutions (Djerassimovic, 2014). Djerassimovic (2014, p. 205) reports that, ‘on an institutional level, the frequently used term ‘partnership’, which implies a degree of equality, often hides a power hierarchy constructed by both sides, a lack of respect reported by host academics and even a rhetoric of colonialism employed by some of the onshore academics in describing this relationship’. For Djerassimovic (2014), the idea of cultural imperialism or colonialism within the TNE field is constructed around the notion of one educational and cultural discourse, carried by more powerful actors, establishing dominance over another educational and cultural discourse, supported by those who either willingly or unwittingly allow for such dominance.

Rather than be constrained by the polarities between ‘Western’ and local in the discourse of globalisation and cultural imperialism, Djerassimovic (2014) argues for moving away from the idea of host nations as agentless victims of cultural imperialism in the TNE discourse.

Djerasimovic argues that the host partners, and the students, host and visiting teachers in TNE, have agency, and calls for a perspective that conceptualises both parties in the transnational partnership as ‘occupying power positions that are not necessarily hierarchical’ (2014, p. 207). She sees in TNE a possibility for empowerment. The study of TNE provision could work towards minimising cultural opposition between two sides and seeking points of contact, similarities of ideologies and ways of transforming an internationalising and enculturating experience.

Thus, TNE might be seen as a transitional phenomenon as, over time, local partner institutions develop their own academic programmes and decrease their reliance on foreign universities. Ziguras (2008) argues that TNE has a capacity-building role in assisting local institutions and their staff to develop their status and to operate independently.

Naidoo (2007, 2010) discusses how the strengthening of HE as a vital engine of economic success faces a lack of resources and expertise in developing countries. She is concerned about the ‘rush by foreign universities and corporate entities to offer academic programmes in developing countries’ (Naidoo, 2007, p. 6). She seeks to develop a research agenda that may lead to capacity building, assuring the quality and standard of such provision, and comparability between state and private sector (Naidoo, 2010). Naidoo recognises that the trends that encourage the provision of HE through foreign providers have the potential to bring benefits, but also dangers, by linking such provision to the hegemonic discourse of the knowledge economy in which developing countries have unequal power (Naidoo, 2010).

2.2.5 The practice of transnational education

There is a substantial body of research, much of it deriving from the scale and early adoption of TNE by Australian institutions, that focuses on understanding the practice of TNE, usually through case studies and on recommending guidance on how that practice might be conducted (Kosmützky and Putty, 2016).

Case study and comparative research studies have considered teaching and learning perspectives on TNE, the impacts on staff and students (Dunn and Wallace, 2008, Woodhouse, 2006), partner relationships (Heffernan and Poole, 2004, 2005), and the management of local teaching staff (Leask, 2004).

Keay, May and O’Mahony (2014) argue that the development of communities of practice in TNE, in which the focus is less on the imposition of one model into another context than on developing the quality of the relationship between partners, is required in order to enhance practice and improve quality.

In the early 2000s Heffernan and Poole (2004) conducted research into 10 Australian case studies of TNE in Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong in response to quality issues in offshore programmes and deterioration in or termination of partnership processes. They used a model of stages in relationship development derived from business literature in which relationships develop from pre-relationship, through early interaction to relationship growth followed by a maturity in the relationship, described simply as partnership and then

relationship end. Focusing on the early interaction stage their findings highlight the significance of key relationship factors (shared vision, communication, trust, commitment, culture) which, unless addressed in the early relationship stage, can lead to deterioration in the later stages and to relationship end. They identify low internal commitment within the Australian university, a failure to identify key roles and responsibilities of the partner and the departure of key personnel as critical factors in TNE relationship success.

In a later study Heffernan and Poole (2005) examined the critical success factors for effective international partnerships, and identified effective communications structures as key. Such structures enable the development of shared meaning, trust, higher commitment between relationship partners, resolving of disputes and alignment of perceptions and expectations, all pertinent to the conduct of quality assurance.

They conducted research into the relationships that develop between the sides involved in delivering TNE, and on how to manage international education relationships. Reviewing the literature at the time, they argued that effective relationships were amongst the most critical and least studied elements of international education partnerships. They argued that shared values, development of trust and mutual respect provide the basis for positive international education relationships. Good practice in TNE identified communication, trust and commitment as the significant variables for the development of successful TNE (Heffernan and Poole, 2005).

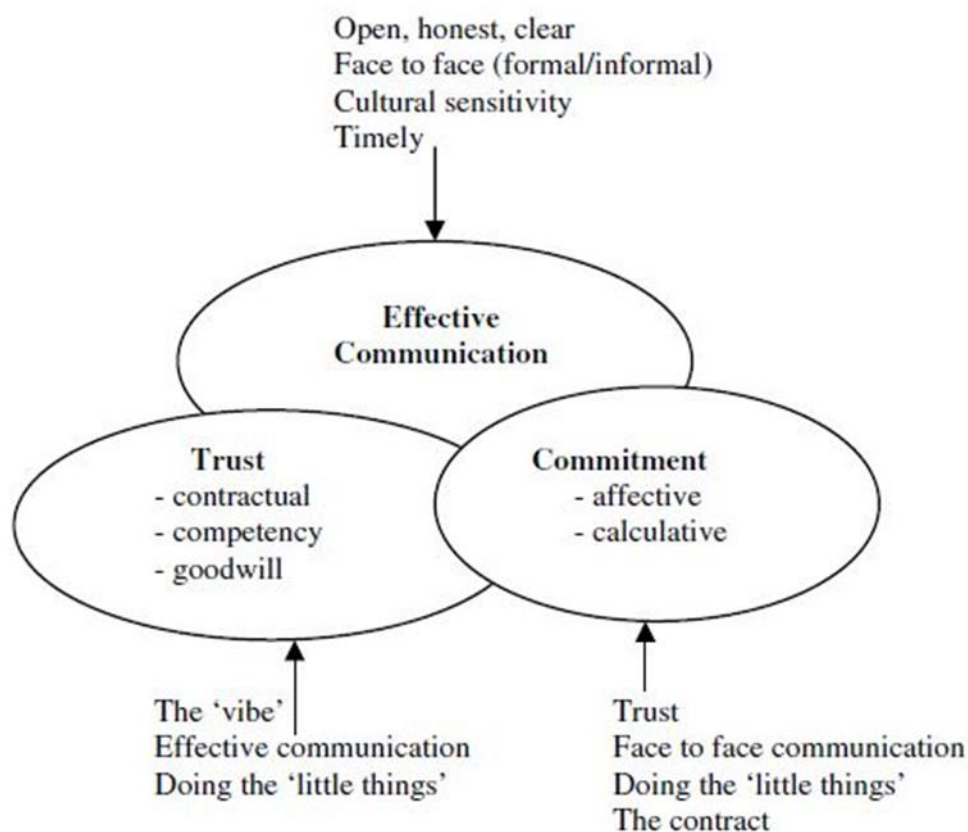


Figure 2.1 Key Success factors for international education partnerships (Heffernan and Poole, 2005, p. 237)

2.2.6 Transnational education and research

Kosmützky and Putty (2016), in their literature review of transnational, offshore, cross-border and borderless HE, argue that TNE emerged as a new thematic field in HE research from the 2000s onwards. They identify 1,931 academic publications in the thematic field between the mid-1990s to 2014, pointing to six themes in the literature on TNE, namely: (a) overview and trends; (b) quality assurance and regulation; (c) teaching and learning; (d) institutional and management perspectives; (e) governance and policy; and (f) student choice and student mobility.

They conclude their literature review with proposed directions for research and suggest a need to illuminate the processes (the ‘how?’), the actors and the influences (the ‘who?’), and their agendas, structures and practices (the ‘what?’) of TNE. This current research examines this within one example of TNE. First, however, the concept of quality assurance and its implementation in UK TNE is investigated.

2.2.7 Implications for the research

This section has highlighted the scope, scale and growth of TNE, the drivers for that growth, and also a critique that places TNE as an agency of globalisation and cultural imperialism, countered by a claim that TNE builds HE capacity and widens access to HE in a country while building the capacity of the local institutions.

In terms of the research aim, it raises the question of whether the regimes of quality assurance brought to TNE are perceived by those involved as the imposition of the sending country’s values or whether they are perceived as intrinsic to the TNE provision contributing to student opportunity and capacity building in the host country. It also raises the question of whether there are approaches, models and practices in TNE and quality assurance that might lend themselves to a capacity-building agenda. This will be discussed in the next section.

2.3 Quality assurance in UK transnational education

2.3.1 The emergence of quality concepts

The concepts of quality, quality control, quality assurance, quality management, total quality, quality circles and quality improvement are subject to a wider discourse generated initially during the 1940s and 1950s in the post-war redevelopment and applied mainly to manufacturing processes. Manufacturing improvements, which affected the quality of products, were highly influenced by North American institutions, academics and authors such as W. Edwards Deming and Philip B. Crosby (see Bell, McBride and Wilson, 1994). The focus of this perspective is the product or service and its ‘conformance to requirements’ (Crosby, 1979) by preventing rather than detecting defects.

Edward Deming has been called the ‘patron saint of quality’ (Creech, 1995, quoted in Knouse et al., 2009). Working in Japan and the US in the second half of the 20th century, he developed 14 principles of quality in a manifesto that was highly influential and that saw the application of his ideas in many industries together with rigorous theoretical development through research (Knouse et al., 2009). He argued that in order to understand how quality

might be achieved, the focus should be less on individual companies and more on supply chain management that delivers the final product or service and which, in order to do so, includes coordination and collaboration between companies within the supply chain, integration of communication and information systems, and the removal of barriers to trust. Deming's legacy has been the shift from adversarial relationships between companies, and therefore uncertainties, which would make supply chain management impossible. Efficient and effective supply chain management requires intense communication, conditions of trust and the sharing of data and information (Knouse et al., 2009).

The management literature argues that the delivery and assurance of quality requires a 'quality culture' in which the values, goals and practice of quality assurance are mutually understood and shared, where quality responsibilities are clear and exercised, and where staff receive appropriate training and development to achieve this. Quality culture is often summarised, to paraphrase a comment by Henry Ford as, 'doing it right when no one is watching' (University Wire, 2016).

Prasad and Tata (2003) conducted a literature review on quality management and practice across national boundaries to develop a model that they claimed was applicable in international quality management as an aid to understanding why differences in quality practices differ, and to help practitioners understand how to develop quality management in different geographic regions. Before we turn to quality assurance in HE and TNE, it is useful to look briefly at Prasad and Tata's model, as set out in Figure 2.2 below.

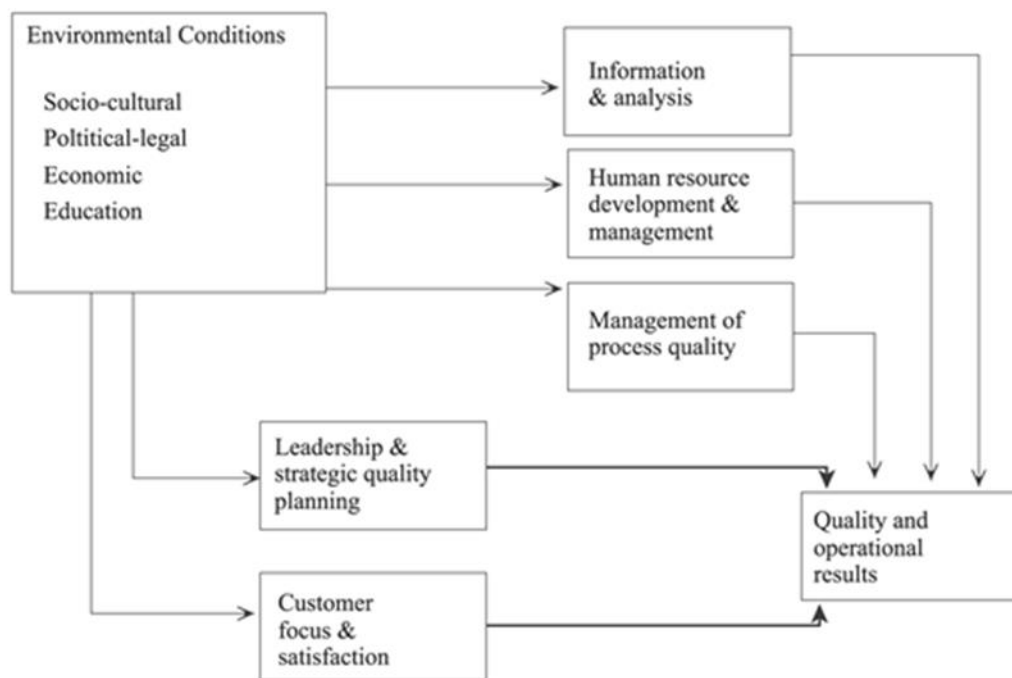


Figure 2.2 Dimensions of international environment and quality management (Source: Prasad and Tata, 2003, p. 490)

Prasad and Tata's systematic literature review was driven by their perceived lack of a comprehensive framework for international quality management, and they developed a model that establishes local environmental conditions as significant variables on the quality management process and outcomes. Amongst the many environmental conditions, they report from the literature are variations in what the critical factors for quality are – attitudes towards managers, authority and human resources, and customer orientation and satisfaction. Amongst the activities to address these variables are the establishment of a 'quality mission', human resource development management and transparency in quality data and information (Prasad and Tata, 2003). The relevance of the model in Figure 2.2 to quality assurance in TNE is evident on first analysis. For instance, there may be different views held between staff in the sending and hosting institutions regarding the importance of the student experience (customer focus and satisfaction), or the importance of quality assurance may not be reinforced at the level of organisational leadership, which impacts on the practice of quality assurance.

The literature on quality assurance in HE does not appear to trace its own lineage back to these management and manufacturing frameworks. Neither does it relate to their later manifestations, such as British Standard (BS) 5750, or the equivalent international standard ISO 9000, which now provide a well-developed framework for the design and development of quality management systems beyond manufacturing (ISO, 2015).

2.3.2 Quality assurance in higher education

Quality in HE itself reflects the complexity of the higher education environment. Altbach et al. (2010) reference the 2007 definition from the UNESCO CEPES report: quality in HE is a multi-dimensional, multi-level and dynamic concept. It is difficult to define because it relates to the contextual settings of an educational model, to the institutional mission and objectives, as well as to the specific standards within a given system, institution, programme or discipline (Vlasceanu et al, 2009). In doing so they suggest that the issue of quality is more usefully addressed as a process than an idea.

Laura Schindler and her colleagues conducted a review and synthesis of definitions of quality in HE (2015), and conclude that 'defining quality and quality assurance in the context of HE continues to pose significant challenges. A review of the literature confirms that there is still no consensus on a definition of quality' (p. 11). They note that there are four groups of stakeholders that must be considered when defining quality: providers (e.g., funding bodies and the community, taxpayers); users of products (e.g., students); users of outputs (e.g., employers); and employees of the sector (e.g., academics and administrators), and each group has a different perspective on quality. They argue that quality is a multi-dimensional concept and unable to be reduced to a one-sentence definition. On the other hand, they point out that given the increasing public and governmental interest in quality in HE, this argument may no longer be acceptable. Institutions must be able to provide evidence to support claims of quality, which often includes systematic assessment of quality. Quality must be able to be defined in order to assess it (Schindler et al., 2015). Schindler et al. suggest that research is needed to determine whether the terms, quality and quality assurance are applicable across

cultures and if so, whether there are distinct regional and national meanings of these terms and how culture might influence the use and meaning of quality terminology.

Quality assurance or assessment is used in a generic sense to describe any systematic review, evaluation or assessment of educational provision in HE (Brennan, de Vries, and Williams, 1997). For Altbach et al. (2010), quality assurance is a process where key elements of HE are measured. In this process they argue that concepts of performance, standards, norms, accreditation, benchmarks, outcomes and accountability overlap to form a quality culture. The differences in exactly what is measured and how reflect the ways different nations and cultures interpret quality. The subject of quality, standards and assurance in HE is far from simple, and the academic literature is large, diverse and subject to challenge.

Brennan, de Vries, and Williams (1997) provide a useful introduction to a complex debate around quality in HE. They argue that quality is subject to controversy because it is about values, power and change, and engages with three ‘underlying controversies’ of language (what is meant by standards and quality?), power (where is the locus and how real is it?) and change (how to effect it and how to make it beneficial?). The power dimension, at the time Brennan et al. were writing, concerned institutional autonomy vis-à-vis government control, and coincides with the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 and the government White Paper *Higher Education: A New Framework* that preceded it (Brown, 2004). Prior to 1992, existing universities were not subject to any external quality regime (Brown, 2004).

Brennan et al. and Brown, amongst others, were witnessing a dramatic change in UK HE following the expansion of the sector in 1992. Polytechnics became universities with degree-awarding powers, and there was a debate concerning the comparability of educational provision between institutions, and a concern amongst some people regarding a possible deterioration of standards, retention of students with wider participation in HE and grade inflation (Middleton, 2011). In the UK, this concern was accentuated by the high level of autonomy over curricula enjoyed by individual institutions, meaning a degree in history or computer science at individual institutions could be very different in structure and content. In contrast, Brennan et al. (1997) note that in many other countries, the government has central control over curricula.

Saarinen (2010), discussing the concept of quality in the 15 years since the journal *Quality in Higher Education* began publishing, suggests it has evolved from a debatable and controversial concept to an everyday matter in HE, ‘from a matter of political substance to a matter of technical implementation’ (2010, p. 55). The challenge of defining quality has led to a position ‘where the issue of quality is addressed more usefully as a process’ (Altbach et al., 2010, p. 53). Quality assurance is a process where key elements of HE are measured and the concepts of performance, standards, norms, benchmarks, outcomes and accountability overlap to form the quality culture and regime within an institution, country or culture (Altbach et al., 2010). Saarinen (2010) describes a position in the 1990s where quality in HE was perceived as being ‘sick and in need of care’, and in need of regulation and control. Debate on quality has been replaced with a focus on the processes of regulation and control, and the technical performance of the regulations and systems.

The traditional form of regulation in HE, as with many other professions, has been self-regulation, by individual institutions and by the academic community collectively (Brennan et al. 1997, Brown, 2004).

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) was established in England and Wales in 1997 as an independent agency with the remit to ‘safeguard standards and support the improvement of quality for students.’ This remit applies ‘whether they study at a university or college in the UK or in any other location worldwide where courses lead to UK higher education qualifications’ (QAA, 2015a, p.4). It took over from the former Higher Education Quality Council and the quality assessment divisions of HE funding councils for England and Wales. Scotland has its own agency.

Since 1997 the UK has retained this mixture of self-regulation and external regulation, although self-regulation is still the principal mode. HEIs retain institutional autonomy. Each HEI with degree-awarding powers is its own ‘awarding body’ responsible for maintaining the standards of its degrees. As an awarding body, each needs to develop, operate and review processes to assure appropriate standards and quality, and to mitigate against the risk of poor quality undermining academic standards. These processes cover design, development, approval and review of programmes, provision and review of teaching and learning, ensuring assessment is undertaken fairly and consistently, and the access of students to mechanisms for appeal, complaint and redress (Middleton, 2011).

Key terms have become established in the quality assurance world of agencies, frameworks and regulatory bodies, in which ‘standards’ refer to the levels of attainment associated with specific awards and the grades required. Standards can be characterised as the outcome of educational provision regarding the skills and knowledge characteristics of the graduates. ‘Quality’ is a broader term applied to the overall academic provision for learning including the design of the curriculum, teaching, student learning opportunities, the learning environment, learning resources, assessment and student engagement (Middleton, 2011).

While each HEI develops and operates its quality management processes, the role of the QAA is to check how universities and colleges maintain their academic standards and quality. The key purpose of quality assurance should, however, be improvement rather than accountability. Brown (2004) argued that quality assurance focused on accountability – in the sense of compliance with standards and rules – should be only a small part of quality assurance, as UK universities and colleges already have programmes of an acceptable standard according to the criteria, and with very few below-threshold assessment judgements. Quality assurance processes should ‘appeal instead to the professional motivation of staff to do better by engaging in a constructive, professional dialogue’ (Brown, 2004, p. 163). In TNE this thesis argues that there is a new relationship and understandings to be established and a need to assess the balance between accountability and enhancement at the start of the TNE provision and during its development.

While HEIs retain autonomy in the design of those processes, the QAA has developed guidance in cooperation with the HE sector, principal among which is the *UK Quality Code*

for Higher Education, usually abbreviated to the *Quality Code* (QAA, 2015a). The main mechanism by which the QAA assesses academic standards and quality is through an institutional review process, which reviews how providers of HE maintain their academic standards and quality. QAA carries out hundreds of reviews each year for all types of institutions, including private and overseas providers. A report is published for each review. The QAA also gathers information on and reports on the activities of UK HEIs in individual countries (QAA, 2017).

With regard to the aim of this research it is interesting to consider whether there is a case for proposing that TNE may also move through a similar shifting in quality assurance, from accountability to enhancement, as that proposed by Brown (2004). This will be discussed in the light of the findings of the research, together with consideration of the factors that might lead to this repurposing of the quality assurance process.

2.3.3 Quality assurance in transnational education

There is a substantial body of work on quality assurance in HE that also considers the international context (Altbach et al., 2010; Chapman and Pyvis, 2006, 2013; King et al., 2011; Martin and Stella, 2007; Stella, 2006; van der Wende and Westerhijden, 2001; Williams et al., 2013). In this research the questions are generally at national policy level, raising issues of whether there is a global convergence in quality assurance frameworks (Altbach et al., 2010), and the risk of ‘substandard provision of education if appropriate quality measures are not in place and enforced’ (Ziguras, 2011, p. 126).

The 2016 report on TNE by the British Council and UK HEGlobal highlights quality assurance as a key challenge for universities, regulators and policy-makers. Providing education across borders, it proposes, exposes UK universities to varying degrees of reputational risk. Distance-learning courses may be compromised by online fraud (e.g. learners using friends to complete assessments). The report suggests that partnership arrangements may be undermined by the ‘principal agent’ problem, with the partner colleges (agents) having different objectives (e.g. profit maximisation rather than academic quality) from the awarding UK universities (principals) (British Council and HEGlobal, 2016).

In the UK, the QAA is quite clear, when setting out the key principles for collaborative provision in its Quality Code, that ‘the degree-awarding body has ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, regardless of where these opportunities are delivered and who provides them’ (2015a, p. 9). The QAA’s role provides guidance to individual HEIs as to how they manage their TNE as well as this regulatory role. This guidance is best expressed in the QAA’s own words:

‘Any process for the quality assurance of TNE needs both to meet relevant objectives and to recognise the particular risks associated with TNE. Objectives centre on providing public assurance, protecting the interests of students, and securing the reputation of UK HE. Individual objectives are distinguished as follows:

- to provide public assurance about the quality and standards of UK TNE programmes

- to protect the interests of students studying on UK TNE programmes
- to secure and enhance the reputation of UK higher education qualifications offered in other countries
- to respond rapidly to issues that may put at risk the academic standards of UK TNE programmes
- to promote enhancement of the quality of UK TNE provision
- to monitor developments in TNE provision and maintain an up to date record of UK activity for quality assurance planning purposes.' (QAA 2013, pp. 7-8.)

In considering risk, the QAA identifies a number of things to be guarded against, including the risk that the provision may not meet academic standards, or deliver the quality of education, required of such provision in the UK. This generates the need for the strengthening the quality assurance of UK TNE and avoiding reputational risk, not just for one institution, but because poor standards and/or quality of one provider can reflect adversely on other UK providers (even if there is no evidence to suggest that the other providers are of poor quality). The QAA also suggests that overseas countries may doubt the rigour of quality assurance by QAA because it is not seen to devote enough systematic attention to looking at TNE. The implication is that QAA needs a level of profile and visibility overseas sufficient to instil confidence in both the quality assurance system and UK TNE provision (QAA, 2013). It is therefore argued in this thesis that the QAA are protecting not only the quality and standards of the provision but also the reputation of UK HE and its commercial interests.

The QAA advises careful management of TNE provision by the provider institution as it suggests fundamental aspects of the UK quality assurance system may not be properly understood overseas, particularly the autonomy of awarding institutions and the absence of a state accreditation system. Too many misconceptions about the UK system may lead to a poor perception of UK TNE (QAA, 2013).

In the UK HEIs have established their own processes and procedures for negotiating, developing and managing collaborative arrangements, and the QAA acknowledges that, while it provides guidance, there can be no 'one size fits all' approach (QAA, 2015a).

The role of quality assurance with regard to reducing these risks of TNE provision is applicable to both the national context and that in operation at the individual institutional level. At a national level, Martin and Stella (2007) report a convergence of mechanisms associated with internationalisation and TNE, as both provider and receiver countries seek to safeguard quality, standards and comparability, and to avoid academic fraud.

At the individual institutional level McBurnie (2008) points to the need for robust quality assurance systems to protect the experience of the students and to fulfil the capacity-building requirements of the host countries that enable TNE within those countries. He detects tensions between academic and commercial priorities, and hence the risk of falling standards (McBurnie, 2008). Martin (2016) considers that the growth of TNE has increased

opportunities for corruption and fraudulent diplomas and credentials, and sees quality assurance systems as protecting the processes of HE services as well as risks to academic integrity such as plagiarism and academic misconduct.

Lim (2008) conducted an investigation into how quality assurance is understood in an Australian university and its Malaysian private education counterpart in a TNE project. The rationale for the study was what Lim reports as ‘sub-standard management practices’ (2008, p. 129) of Malaysian private partners, a large number of quality assurance issues in TNE, and an apparent contradiction between these concerns and the statements of the respective governments about their quality assurance systems. Lim’s findings at an institutional level include different positions held on quality assurance from different groups of stakeholders, including differing views on purpose and expectations as well as different levels of commitment, motivation and effort to be expended. This research revealed a distinction between the rhetoric of government and the institutions about the quality assurance process and how it is understood and conducted in practice, something this research will investigate. One of the most significant findings of this study is that ‘miscommunication and a lack of understanding of quality assurance is especially noticeable at the academic level’ (Lim, 2008, p. 135).

In a study of external quality assurance, such as the role of the QAA with regard to UK HEIs and TNE, it is argued that two sets of literature, namely (a) on the impact of national HE systems of quality assurance and (b) on cross-border HE, are separate, ‘practically without overlap’ (Cremonini et al., 2012, p. 5). In their research with 10 TNE providers Cremonini et al. (2012) explore the role of external quality assurance on institutional behaviour. All the providers acknowledged the need for external quality assurance, and there was agreement that the general student experience and teaching and learning benefited. A distinction is made between the role of quality assurance systems in demonstrating compliance with the requirements set by the provider in which minimum standards are guaranteed, and the role of quality assurance in improvement. While quality assurance arrangements are based largely on the sending countries’ requirements, Cremonini et al. (2012) recommend that quality assurance systems should take into account the cultural and linguistic sensitivities of the receiving country, and respect the local quality assurance arrangements.

According to Kosmützky and Putty (2016), much of the research literature on quality assurance and regulation is concerned with identifying current approaches, forms and good practices in quality assurance. They describe quality assurance as one of the most important challenges of TNE, and one where the research is dominated by single case studies. They raise the issue that many of the scholarly works uncritically treat TNE as a ‘given’, and the literature actually adopts a prescriptive tone for the ‘successes’ of transnational ventures without challenging the ideological or normative underpinnings of the same. This, they argue, assumes special significance given the unequal structures of the knowledge economy, and that vast parts of the globe are still to achieve comparable enrolment figures in tertiary education.

2.3.4 Quality, control and power

Quality assurance is a heavily challenged concept in the literature of critical management studies. Knights and McCabe (1999) argue that there is an implicit position in the work of much of the quality literature that adopts a rational view of organisations and management which assumes that management can plan and achieves conformance to requirements or constancy of purpose, and that organisational outcomes will match desired intentions and objectives.

In a seminal article introducing a special edition of *Administrative Science Quarterly*, John Jermier (1998) critically appraises traditional and emerging ways in which the management processes control and shape organisations through configuration of control and their employees. Quality assurance be understood as a 'configuration of control' within and between organisations and, as such, requires a thoughtful approach that acknowledges the power relations in TNE and how people in both the sending and host institutions experience quality assurance processes. While characterising two contrasting approaches to configurations of control as 'iron fist' and 'velvet glove', as a way of framing the issues, Jermier looks at processes of control and the exercise of power as integral to the way organisations operate. This is a major and ongoing discourse in critical theory. It should be noted however that Jermier presents a critique of forms of control, from coercive to bureaucratic to normative, which have a relevance to the processes of quality assurance in TNE.

Jermier (1998) presents a case that managerial practices moved away from widespread reliance on coercive control in the late-nineteenth century toward technological control (such as the assembly line) and then, by the mid-twentieth century, to bureaucratic forms of control through tightly managed procedures. He suggests that contemporary organizations are making more use of post-bureaucratic systems of control, which rely heavily on advanced technology, teamwork and on the inculcation of emotions, values, and congruence worldviews, a normative or shared cultural basis for control, with the interests of the more powerful constituents to the fore.

Alvesson and Deetz (2000) adopt a critical management research approach which aims to develop knowledge about the management of organisations while also aiming 'to counteract the dominance of taken-for-granted goals, ideas, ideologies, and discourse which put their imprints on management and organisation phenomena' (p.18). They argue that organisational structures, routines and social processes often constrain the management function in ways that lead to less successful organisational functioning. For Alvesson and Deetz (2000) critical management research means studying asymmetrical relations of power, including dependencies. Citing Foucault (1977), they argue that power is everywhere, embedded not only in relations but in the 'discursive formation itself', being the ways of reasoning and the practices that together organise social institutions (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000 p. 104).

For the purpose of this thesis the research design and findings need to take account of the position that TNE and quality assurance are not value or power free practices and that power resides in the discourse of quality assurance that leads to the adoption of practices, norms and

expectations established by others. Alvesson and Deetz argue that a critical investigation into the local form of a phenomena can lead potentially to ‘the development of critical, managerially relevant knowledge and practical understandings that enable change and provide skills to new ways of operating’ (2000, p.19). Such a local form is quality assurance in at the institutional level in TNE, a local practice where we have a dependency of the local institution on the sending and award making institution. Quality assurance, as a term and a process, implies an assurer, an inspector, and the implied exercise of power in the name of quality.

Morley (2003) argues that the insertion of the quality discourse into HE is an example of the changing power relations between universities and the state. She argues that the globalisation, and the economic exploitation of knowledge, is leading to standardisation of the educational product of HE and the credentials of graduates through quality assurance processes. The ‘use of the language of quality assurance e.g. enhancement and improvement, is hard to contest and disguises the operation of circuits of power’ (p, 49). She argues that quality assurance is a socially constructed domain of power, difficult to contest, as resistance implies the opposite of quality, including unreliability and shoddiness.

Smith, (2010) conducted linguistic analysis of three codes of practice from major exporters of HE, the US, UK and Australia, specifically looking at the roles and responsibilities of the awarding HE institution and their partner. The three documents all offer guidance on the assurance of quality of educational experiences for students enrolled on a programme provided by a university in another country, supported to a greater or lesser extent by a partner organisation in the student’s country of residence. She finds that, in all three documents, the awarding institutions are rendered powerful in terms of the processes or the actions of the verbs due to their prominence (in both active and passive clauses) in the subject position. The linguistic organisation of the texts ‘renders the exporting institution all powerful’ (p. 802) and the awarding institution is deemed to be in control of the collaborative partnership. She finds opportunities for truly collaborative and culturally appropriate course design are muted and argues that as long as quality assurance guidance documentation does not applaud closer, more equal collaborative provision, it can be argued that it is easier for institutions to justify models where inflexibly designed courses are shipped overseas for delivery in the name of equivalence. While textual analysis cannot capture how a reader interprets a text, it can, as she argues, reveal potential interpretations, motivations, underlying approaches and tensions within current transnational relationships. The production of such documentation legitimises certain views of the world and ways of practising and power relations.

This dimension of power in quality assurance, and the dependency between sending and hosting institutions, together with power dimension of TNE and its dynamics in national post-colonial contexts, requires sensitivity and reflexivity in the research design.

2.3.5 Implications for the research

In summary, the role of quality assurance in providing confirmation regarding the quality and standards of awards in TNE has been discussed in this section, and a number of variables

with a potential bearing on the nature of the quality assurance process at institutional level have been identified in the initial literature review.

The implementation of TNE at the institutional level does not generally establish a new quality assurance regime but rather, sees the concepts, processes and governance mechanisms of the awarding institution, and by extension, its national requirements, implemented at the local delivery institution. This approach has been subject to a critique that the 'current approach to educational quality formation in transnational HE promotes educational imperialism, and that guidelines and practices should be altered to embrace context-sensitive measures of quality' (Pyvis, 2011, p. 773). Alternatively, in terms of capacity building, Altbach et al. (2010) argue that the acceptance of quality assurance schemes has grown, and where they might previously have been seen in many countries as an affront to institutional and national autonomy, they are now valued in contributing to the challenges facing HE from globalisation.

The initial investigation into the research question has established the problematic nature of quality assurance in TNE. To understand that process it must be placed in the context of the relationship between the two partners and how it is perceived and experienced. This relationship exists in a global and national context. The central tenet of this process is that the sender/provider institution requires the implementation of, and compliance to, a code of practice from a developed economy to a host institution within a developing economy, where ideas, concepts and frameworks of quality assurance may be different.

Exploring the views of stakeholders in both sender and host institution in terms of how the process of quality assurance is understood and conducted (imposition or joint enterprise, for instance) may highlight relationships between these views and the perceived effectiveness of the quality assurance process.

Some variables with a potential bearing on the effectiveness of the quality assurance process at institutional level have been identified in the initial literature review. They provide an initial framework for analysis and research design, and relate to:

- the perspective on TNE as cultural imperialism tempered by a mutually compatible view that TNE can aid in capacity building in the host country dependent on how the TNE is managed and developed (Naidoo, 2007; Ziguras, 2008, 2011);
- the public or private status of the institutions (Lim, 2008; Martin and Stella, 2007; Naidoo, 2007; Ziguras, 2011);
- the model of TNE employed (British Council and DAAD, 2014; Connelly et al., 2006);
- the nature of the partnership relationship and its communication structures and the practice of TNE (Heffernan and Poole, 2005; Keay et al., 2014; Lim, 2008; Smith, 2010);
- how the relationship is perceived in power terms (Djerasimovic, 2014); and

- the importance of understanding the socio-cultural, political, legal, economic and educational dimensions of the quality assurance process (Prasad and Tata, 2003).

It is this relationship between a set of contextual, institutional and relationship variables and of the quality assurance process in TNE that the research investigates.

From this review of the literature the focus of the individual institutions involved in TNE has been on empirical research, presenting findings on practice and generating guidance. There has been little in the way of theory or concepts to frame these investigations.

In seeking useful concepts, the literature on supply chain quality management (SCQM) was initially investigated as a field of study derived from the wider field of quality management. This field concerns how companies across inter-organisational supply chains have, in recent years, moved away from adversarial relationships towards coordination and integration of activities in pursuit of improved performance and quality (Robinson and Malhotra, 2005).

As has been established, quality assurance in TNE is an inter-organisational process. In order to develop a theoretical framework for examining quality assurance in TNE the literature on inter-firm relationships offers a range of pertinent concepts and frameworks that can be applied to TNE.

This literature appears to be a very fruitful source of frameworks and concepts on collaborative working to offer many insights into how we might frame and understand TNE as being primarily about the dynamics of inter-organisational relationships rather than an extension or imposition of the regulations and procedures of one organisation (sender) over another (host) with a requirement of compliance.

2.4 Inter-organisational relationships and relational capital

2.4.1 Relevance of the literature to transnational education

As TNE involves inter-organisational relationships, it is important to examine inter-organisational alliances and partnerships as researched in the management literature. This section of the literature review examines some frameworks and approaches developed to understand the process of quality assurance within supply chains more often associated with manufacturing. The purpose is to explore whether there are any concepts or frameworks to help understand the nature of the relationships in TNE with a potential impact on quality assurance processes.

2.4.2 Inter-organisational relationships and supply chain quality management

The extensive literature on inter-firm relationships and relationship development and management is one that has focused on the ways in which firms manage the supply process and, through those processes, have dealt with complexity and globalisation (Cousins, 2002). The concept of supply chain quality management (SCQM) has, in recent research, moved towards the inter-organisational supply chain and the relationships between its component parts. Robinson and Malhotra (2004) have argued that SCQM across inter-organisational supply chains has received scant research attention to date. In establishing a research agenda,

Robinson and Malhotra (2004) identified a number of key themes, amongst which are communication and partnership activities that involve organisations working closely together and nurturing relationships in order to share goals, coordinate activities and improve performance, precisely the aspirations of quality assurance in TNE.

As the supply chain has become more complex (Cousins, 2002; Lin et al., 2005), it has also become the management arena for business gains through the integration of operations and information flows beyond the boundary of the individual organisation (Chan and Kumar, 2014). As Chan and Kumar (2014) contend, the effectiveness of supply chain operations depends, it is argued, on the seamless collaboration between organisations in the supply chain.

Cousins (2002), in his literature review on inter-firm relationships, argues that the relationship between the firms within the supply chain is not an entity but a process, and as such it needs to be focused on the desired outcome. Once that is decided, the appropriate collaborative relationship can be developed. In Cousins' conceptual model for managing long-term inter-organisational relationships, the collaborative relationship will first be influenced by inter-organisational dependencies (2002). Relating this to TNE, the degree-awarding body has the 'product' that the local provider requires, and once established, the 'switching' costs to move to another provider are high.

A second dimension impacting on the nature of the collaborative provision relationship is of the inter-organisational certainties that relate to the concept of trust in another's behaviour or anticipated behaviour. Figure 2.3 shows a typology of certainties, all of which are mutually compatible and desirable in an inter-firm relationship and which might be ascertained through a process of due diligence in the setting up of the relationship and developed during it (Cousins, 2002).

Certainty	Definitions of certainty
Contractual	How certain are the parties that one or other will perform to the specifications of the contract?
Competence	How certain are the parties that one or other has the capabilities to perform to the contract? e.g. the required levels of skills and competencies, technological capability.
Goodwill	How certain are the parties that one or other will be willing (or not), to go beyond their contractual duties and help the other should they need it?
Political	How certain are the parties that the other is able to fulfil any internal or external political issues? e.g. protection of data, intellectual property, etc.

Figure 2.3 A typology of inter-organisational certainties (Cousins, 2002, p. 80)

In the development of a collaborative relationship the nature of the dependency and the uncertainties will determine how the relationship will be implemented and perceived – for

example, mutual dependency and high certainty would indicate a strategic collaboration as shown in Figure 2.4 below.

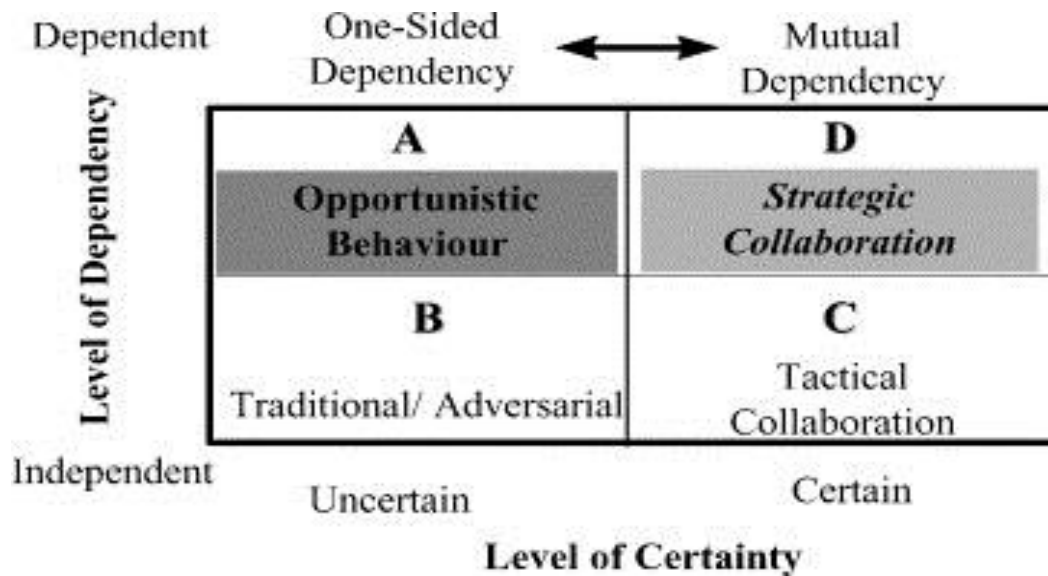


Figure 2.4 A dependency and certainty conceptual model of inter-firm relationships (Cousins, 2002, p. 78)

Cousins and Spekman (2003), in their study of purchasing personnel working in strategic relationship management, found that respondents reported that the relationship had delivered greater than expected benefits. However, the required process skill set of team-based working, inter-personal communication, commercial awareness, negotiation and analytical skills are very different from the traditional purchasing skill set of product knowledge and pricing. They note the need to change from seeing the purchasing role as a clerical one to that of strategic relationship management, and to underpin that with the required skills and competencies.

Cousins and Menguc (2006) point to the importance of socialisation between individuals as a mechanism to achieve integration in supply chain management. Socialisation is said to form bonds and ties as individuals share information, understand how each other works, helping to build a culture of mutual commitment. They identify socialisation mechanisms such as cross-functional teams, exchange of personnel across projects, visits, conferences, team-building exercises to foster communication and relationship building. Such socialisation is a mechanism to facilitate knowledge exchanges within and between firms and inter-organisational learning. They argue that communication should be established through both informal and formal links, from ad hoc telephone conversations to regular meetings. In their study (2006) they find a strong correlation between socialisation and operational communication leading to improved performance and contractual compliance through increased relational competences. They also suggest that improvements to relational development derived from improved communication as a result of socialisation improve the perception, as well as the reality, of the interaction process.

The literature on inter-firm relationships offers an opportunity to consider relationship management in TNE in terms of its dependence on processes of communication and

socialisation and the related concept of relational capital. The cumulative impact of inter-organisational socialisation activities is said to create supply chain relational capital.

2.4.3 Relational capital

Relational capital is a concept that has emerged in the literature and arena of business and management studies and as such is argued as being distinctive from, although related to, the concept of social capital (Still, Huhtamaki and Russell, 2013).

Social capital is a well-established concept in the field of sociology focusing attention on the positive consequences of socialisation (Portes, 1998); in the wider framework of 'capital', non-monetary forms can be important sources of power and influence. Social capital essentially presents the idea that involvement and participation in groups and networks can benefit both the individual and the group, although, as a major research field, it remains a subject of academic discourse and debate (Portes, 1998). Bourdieu, who conducted one of the first analyses of the concept, defined social capital as 'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition' (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 248, quoted in Portes, 1998). Lin offers a simple premise, 'social capital being investment in social relations with expected returns' (Lin, 2001, p. 6) and defines social capital as 'resources embedded in a social structure which are accessed and/or mobilized in purposeful actions' (2001, p. 12). The source of social capital is in social networks and social relations (Lin, 2001). The acquisition of social capital requires deliberate investment of resources (Portes, 1998). Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) argue that relational capital is one of three dimensions of social capital (the others being structural and cognitive). According to them, the relational dimension of social capital refers to those assets created and leveraged through relationships, and could be measured by the individual's or social unit's mutual trust, trustworthiness, norms and sanctions, obligations and expectations, and identity and identification. The concept for them is related to a theory of how firms can gain organizational advantage.

While the terms 'social' and 'relationship' capital are sometimes argued as being interchangeable (Cousins et al., 2006), they have particular and distinct foci and literatures (Still et al, 2013). Levin, et al's work (2016) on the 'relational dimension of social capital' demonstrates however that the two concepts are closely related (2016 p. 146).

Relational capital can be seen as an application of the concept of social capital to the field of inter-firm relationships and alliances and its stakeholders (Still et al., 2013).

Still, et al. (2013) explain relational capital as value that is created and maintained by having, nurturing and managing good relationships in the totality of relations between a firm and its stakeholders. They extend the concept further into the concept of an 'ecosystemic relational capital' (p.15), as it is through networks of multiple external entities and relationships within and across organisations that knowledge transfer, technology dissemination and organisational change are accomplished.

Dyer and Singh (1998) argue that relational capital is a resource that is created through social network processes (see also Liu et al., 2010). They argue that competitive advantages derive not only from firm-level resources but also from difficult-to-imitate capabilities embedded in relationships.

In their formative study, Dyer and Singh (1998) argue that an increasingly important area of analysis for understanding competitive advantage is the relationship between firms, and they identify four potential sources of inter-organisational competitive advantage: (1) relation-specific assets; (2) knowledge-sharing routines; (3) complementary resources/capabilities; and (4) effective governance. Thus, the concept of relational capital is seen as comprising assets, knowledge, capabilities and governance processes created through a firm's relational resources with other firms that could not be generated by either firm on its own.

The literature on relational capital identifies three dimensions to relational capital: trust, transparency and interaction (Liu et al., 2010). Transparency and interaction are regarded as constructs that facilitate trust. Transparency between alliance partners acts as an effective mechanism to open a discussion of problems and engender better communication. This relates to the concept of trust defined as certainty in behaviour identified by Cousins (2002). Social interaction between exchange partners generates trust through offering more cues for interpreting a partner's behaviour and motivations, thereby increasing the efficacy of social norms and sanctions (Liu et al., 2010). Liu et al. (2010) conclude that close interactions between different levels of personnel in the organisations in a relationship broadens communication channels, facilitates information flows and knowledge acquisition, and develops trust which leads to shared understandings between the alliance partners.

Rivera and Carrillo (2016) state that relational capital may be understood as the ability of the firm to interact positively with business community members, thus stimulating the potential for wealth creation. From their literature review of relational capital, they characterise the concept in terms of a number of dimensions, such as 'individuals' mutual trust, trustworthiness, norms and sanctions, obligations and expectations, identity and identification, mutual commitment, information exchange, the strength of their social ties, and the extent to which they share common processes and values' (p.435). Rivera and Carrillo (2016), having conducted their research into network agents, relational capital fosters actors' interaction, as well as the creation of network ties that create opportunities for novel combinations and re-combinations of ideas. Developing relational capital 'allows the integration of better solutions originating from different knowledge bases, triggers new ideas that challenge existing knowledge and understanding, and encourages creativity and novel solutions' (p.443).

As example of the application of the concept of relational capital is a study by Cricelli and Greco (2013) who conducted a study into relational capital and performances in inter-university research consortia. They consider relational capital as representing an organisation's relations and knowledge exchange with its stakeholders. They use social network analysis in 42 inter-university research consortia involving the University of Rome, and explore the relation of the interactions of the social network of each research consortia

and their economic performance. They conclude that consortia with better relationships, as indicated by indicators of 'closeness' and 'betweenness' in social network analysis do perform more successfully than those with lower levels.

Miocevic (2016) conducted a study of relational capital in Croatian SME's exporting across borders who, he argues establish long-term relationships with key overseas importers in order to minimize the risks of doing business in a foreign market. Relational capital for Miocevic is a form of intangible asset that results from mutually beneficial dyadic relationships co-created by both constituencies. Relational capital is defined as the mutual trust, respect, reciprocity, close personal interaction, and friendship that emerge between constituencies in business relationships.

Miocevic (2016) argues that the process of developing such long-term relationships is complex and requires time, effort, and investment, especially when partners come from different cultures and business environments. The development of relational capital requires an investment, both economic and social. Relational capital is a signal of the longevity of the relationship because it results from repeated exchanges between business partners over time. Relational capital, built in such a way and establishing relational bonding norms, is also 'associated with less need for administrative types of governance' (2016, p.199). Relational bonding norms are the formal (political and regulatory) and informal (values, norms, and rituals) institutional environments that shape and influence the relational exchanges such as information exchange, enhanced communication, and long-term orientation. The goal of relational bonding norms is to overcome the physical distance that exists between exporter and importer (Miocevic, 2016).

Relational capital and its development is a potentially useful concept to apply to the inter-organisational relations of institutions engaged in TNE and their performance in quality assurance processes. It is possible to argue the value of the concept for understanding the nature of TNE relationships and how quality assurance process are perceived and implemented through socialisation and relational exchanges.

2.5 Relational competences and competencies

The literature on relational capital also raises the idea of relational competence (Paulraj, Lado and Chen, 2008).

Relational competence is described as an organisation's ability to purposefully and actively build, maintain and develop collaborative relations and to contribute to their effective social functioning (Pauget and Wald, 2013). In their study Pauget and Wald (2013) were looking at a complex and virtual project management context for the building of a new hospital. Their premise is that heterogeneity in the project teams and tasks creates structural complexity by inflating the number and interdependence of the elements to be coordinated. The ability of project members to create, reproduce and develop their network, and how this ability contributes to the coordination of heterogeneous partners in a project network is what they call relational competence. They argue that relational competence is first of all a social competence as it enables actors to adapt to an embedded social context and to contribute to

the social functioning of a network. The relational competence of an actor may manifest itself in the different roles they may play in coordinating and developing their network such as that of coordinator who often takes a leadership role, a gatekeeper, who mediates contact with the external environment for the project team, and a mediator/translator who helps create a common culture and language within the network (2013). Table 2.1 summarizes the main characteristics of the three roles of relational competence.

Relational competence	Coordinator	Gatekeeper	Mediator/translator
Creating	Introducing rules	Building bridges between the inside and the outside	Awareness of differing values and languages inside the network
Structuring	Establishing rules	Two alternative roles: – External representation – Establishing access to external resources	Establish a common language to share values
Adapting	Enforcing rules	Changing the perception of the external world	Adapt language to different values

Table 2.1 Relational competences by role (Pauget and Wald 2013, p. 203).

Central to relational competence is communication, and Pauget and Wald (2013) particularly evidence the importance of informal rather than formal communication (Wald 2013).

For Paulraj et al. (2008), the key to relational competence, likewise, is communication. Amongst supply chain members, communication can foster inter-organisational learning, which they regard as crucial to competitive success. Paulraj et al. refer to competences as organisational capabilities which each institution will develop from an organisational perspective, for instance, through the adoption of information technology and through ‘network governance’ which enables the exchange of information amongst partners and facilitates relational exchanges (Paulraj et al. 2008). They argue that inter-organisational communication is operationalised through the sharing of critical and sensitive information, the exchange of information frequently, timely and informally, maintaining frequent face-to-face meetings and closely monitoring and staying abreast of events or changes that may affect both parties (Paulraj et al. 2008).

In their examination of the strategic supply chain, Cousins et al. (2008) distinguish between competences and competencies. Competences are organisational outputs or roles required to fulfil organisational goals. Competencies are the characteristics of the individual which results in effective performance in a role. They reference Boyatzis (1982) in proposing that effective role performance can only occur when three critical components fit together in a congruent manner: the role’s demands, the organisational environment and the individual’s competencies. Boyatzis (1982) develops the competencies required for six competence

clusters, action management, leadership, people management, directing subordinates, a focus on others and specialised knowledge (1982).

For each of these clusters, individual competencies are grouped into four types (Cousins et al. 2008, pp. 115- 116) which have clear implications for the management of TNE provision:

Natural: underlying traits and personality dimensions, for example, sociability, engagement and ready communication with people from TNE partner. These competencies are seen to be difficult to develop, and therefore individuals should be selected if they are judged to possess natural competencies seen as critical to the key competences for the relationship.

Acquired: knowledge and skills including professional knowledge and experience, for example, associated with TNE and quality assurance.

Adapting: competencies regarding an individual's ability to deal with change and ambiguity, for instance, the requirement to operate across institutions in TNE.

Performing: observable behaviours that are produced as a result of the combination of the previous three clusters. For example, in TNE these might be chairing partnership, field and award boards, problem solving and development planning.

These concepts of relational competence and the competencies of individuals holding the key roles, have received little to no debate on their applicability to the achievement of quality assurance in TNE. It is argued in this research that these concepts from inter-firm organisational studies have much to offer an understanding of TNE and its operation. The perceptions held of the nature of the quality assurance process will establish, for each TNE project, the organisational competences required to manage and deliver the provision. How those competences are defined will, in turn, influence the expectations of the competencies required to fulfil the roles. If quality assurance is perceived as a bureaucratic administrative process, its required roles and their skills set and performance measures will be perceived in a way to match the requirements. Likewise, if the quality assurance process is perceived as a process of improvement or enhancement, through discussion, aligned to a process perceived to be one of relationship building, a very different set of roles and competencies will be required. While quality assurance in TNE requires compliance with the requirements, how that is achieved will be influenced by the relational competencies of the actors.

Cousins and Menguc (2006) find that relational competence is directly supported by socialisation activities. In terms of TNE the question arises as to whether and how these socialisation activities are conducted across borders and cultures.

The question of how quality assurance is perceived and the organisational competences and individual competencies so developed and prioritised from those perceptions will therefore be a key area of interest for this research.

2.6 Inter-cultural communication and competence

2.6.1 Inter-cultural Communication

TNE crosses national and cultural boundaries, as will any associated quality assurance process. This section looks at the literature on inter-cultural communication and the next section looks at the concept of competence in inter-cultural communication, examining how scholars have viewed the latter as an attainable area of expertise for work across cultural boundaries and thus in TNE.

If communication is vital to the building of relational capital, a further source of insight comes from the literature on inter-cultural communication. In the last 40 years issues of cross-cultural and inter-cultural communication have attracted theoretical and empirical attention in many disciplines (Otten et al., 2009). Sorrells (2011) writes of a world that has ‘catapulted people, practices and beliefs from different cultures into shared and contested physical and virtual spaces...in unprecedented ways’ (Sorrells, 2012, p. 372). This is clearly the case in the globalisation and internationalisation of HE as student, staff and programme mobility bring people from multiple cultural backgrounds to interact across the world.

The field of inter-cultural relations and communication, with its roots in applied linguistics, is a multi-disciplinary one that considers how culture and language mutually influence each other when people interact and communicate across cultures (Martin, 2015). In an overview of developments within the discipline, Martin (2015) describes a move from a focus on national culture groups that are presumed to be homogenous to a position when an individual’s culture, and that of the ‘other’ in inter-cultural communication, are singular. She argues that there has also been a move from an implicit conceptualisation of culture as bounded and stable, to conceptualisations that acknowledge the fluid, dynamic, contested nature of cultures, multiple cultural identities and inter-cultural interactions (Martin, 2015, p. 7). Thus while ‘inter-cultural’ began as a somewhat limited concept referring to interactions between individuals from differing national backgrounds, the concept of ‘culture’ has gradually expanded to regional, ethnic, organisational, occupational, and relational entities (Ruben, 2014).

This research doesn’t explore the meaning of culture, taking the position instead, from Otten et al. (2009) that cultural practices shape and pervade institutions such as business, education, science and politics as well as everyday life and personal encounters. This means that all social systems – from relationships to societies – have distinctive cultures, and individuals can be members of multiple cultures. It also means, by implication, that all communication is inter-cultural to some extent. Ruben (2015) argues that many of the challenges of inter-personal communication, as well as those between individuals from different national or ethnic backgrounds, can be better understood, studied and enhanced if viewed as instances of inter-cultural communication, whereby the similarity of the language spoken often conceals other cultural, experiential or educational differences that are challenges to communication (Ruben, 2015). Gudykunst and Kim (2003) conceptualise the phenomenon of inter-cultural communication as ‘...a transactional, symbolic process involving the attribution of meaning between people from different cultures’ (p. 17).

Authors who use the concept of inter-cultural communication in an applied way include Kotthoff and Spencer-Oatey (2007), who are interested in using it to address ‘real-world problems’, including:

- Misunderstandings and the impact of cultural factors on the making of meaning
- Conflict and the impact of cultural factors on relationship management and development
- The impact of unequal power relations on communication
- Business and management success in inter-cultural contexts.

(2007, p. 4)

For this research into TNE and the process of quality assurance, the inter-cultural communication literature establishes that inter-cultural factors will have an impact on that process and the assumptions and meanings that it embodies. The research design explores that position.

2.6.2 Inter-cultural competence

A conceptual development from the field of inter-cultural communication is that of inter-cultural competence, sometimes referred to as global competence, cultural intelligence or inter-cultural sensitivity, depending on the discipline, approach and context (Deardorff, 2015). Linked to this is the subject of inter-cultural training (Nam, Weaver and delMas, 2015) and inter-cultural training education (Stier, 2006), whereby inter-cultural competence is said to be developed.

As far as this literature review can identify, much of the conceptual and theoretical development of the field of inter-cultural competence has come from authors in north America. A substantial proportion has also come from what Derek Bok, in his foreword to the *Sage Handbook of Inter-Cultural Competence*, refers to as educational contexts, especially international student mobility and attempts to develop inter-cultural competence in students in preparation for their study abroad (Bok, 2009, pp. ix-x).

Inter-cultural competence is multi-faceted and complex. Certain skills cannot be taught but can only be achieved through exposure, first-hand experience and reflection (Stier, 2006). Authors such as Stier are driven by first, developing the ‘cornerstones of inter-cultural competencies’, and second, developing a model for inter-cultural education (Stier, 2006, p. 5).

The field of inter-cultural competence is a challenging one; even definitions of it can be claimed as culturally specific. It is claimed, however, that there is such a competence, that it can be developed in individuals, but that to do so is ‘extraordinarily complicated’ (Trimble et al., 2009). Trimble et al. (2009) use the counterpoint of *inter-cultural incompetence* to analyse two cases and highlight the costs, emotional and economic, of failing to develop intercultural competence.

Hammer, reflecting on the field of inter-cultural communication over the previous 20 years, argues that there are two paradigms in the approach to inter-cultural competence. The first he refers to as the mainstream 'Cognitive/ Affective/ Behavioural (CAB) paradigm' (2015, p. 12). In this paradigm, research has focused on the personal characteristic components of inter-cultural competence (Hammer, 2015). Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) identify many such approaches and models from the literature for investigating inter-cultural competence, based on a set of intrapersonal characteristics, for example, motivations, knowledge, skills, context, and outcomes. They find extensive diversity at the sub-component level by different researchers. For instance, they identify over 100 skills identified as sub-components across a wide range of research including higher order skills such as trust building and lower-order skills, such as listening, eye contact, asking questions, conversational skills, and attentiveness, and 40 sub-components for the outcome factor of inter-cultural competence, including goal attainment, communication satisfaction and effective participation (Spitzberg and Changnon 2009, p. 43).

Other studies develop similar but different inter-cultural competence dimensions such as motivations, expectations, initiative/self-confidence, coping with problems originating in inter-cultural encounters, noticing cultural differences without imposing a value on them, non-verbal behaviours (e.g., direct/indirect eye contact), conversational codes and management behaviours (e.g., asking questions), abilities in managing stress, communicating effectively and developing relationships in a foreign culture, cross-cultural attitude, cultural understanding, placing oneself in the position of the other, and uncertainty and anxiety reduction strategies (Hammer, 2015; Stier, 2003, 2006).

The second paradigm (Hammer, 2015) is described as developmental, and this paradigm views gains in inter-cultural competence as a function of the extent and quality of the individual's engagement with cultural difference. As such, it is grounded more in the dynamic interaction that arises between individuals rather than more static, personal characteristics (Hammer, 2015). Under both paradigms there is an assumption that inter-cultural competence exists, that it can improve inter-cultural interaction, that it can be developed, and that experiential learning through people engaging with inter-cultural interaction is the mechanism whereby it can either be obtained (developmental paradigm) or developed (CAB paradigm).

While relevant to any environment in which organisations seek to develop inter-cultural communication, inter-cultural competence has been particularly investigated in the area of HE. This has been particularly driven by student mobility with the focus on the pedagogic challenges for staff and students. Stier (2006) argues that the internationalisation of HE demands more elaborate pedagogical approaches to utilise the experience of multi-cultural student groups, and to facilitate and develop inter-cultural competence through inter-cultural education. Stier (2006) proposes an approach to inter-cultural education that distinguishes between content competence (cultural knowledge and shared meaning specific to situational conditions including language, non-verbal behaviour, world views, do's and don'ts, values, norms and habits) and processual competence (knowing how to do things) in order to provide an individual with cultural functionality.

Stier, and other authors such as Deardorff (2015), Ruben (2015), Collier (2015), Jackson (2015), Koester and Lustig (2015) and Coperías Aguilar (2009), exploring inter-cultural competence in HE, focus on the students brought together by internationalisation and study abroad programmes. They design and deliver international cultural education to develop those competences, and argue that they improve student employability in the labour market. It is equally the case, however, that TNE faces the same challenges of inter-cultural communication between managers, academic staff, administrators and students as the stakeholders, actors and subjects of the process of quality assurance.

2.6.3 Implications for the research

In this research I investigate how TNE projects acknowledge that they are operating in an inter-cultural environment that may be problematic in terms of achieving effective communication with regard to quality assurance (both in terms of content and processual competence). Second, I explore the extent to which TNE projects might work with partners to develop shared meanings and communicate how to do things in such a way as to empower local staff to solve problems.

2.7 Higher education in Sri Lanka

The location for the research is the UK and Sri Lanka. This section discusses the social, economic, cultural and political context for the study and provides a brief description of HE in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka is an Asian island country with a population of 20,277,597 (in the 2012 census) and with a literacy rate of 91.2% (Department of Census and Statistics - Sri Lanka, 2014). The country gained independence from the UK in 1948 as Ceylon, changing its name to Sri Lanka in 1972. In recent years, the country has seen a civil war which ended controversially in 2009, with accusations of atrocities (Index Mundi, 2014).

An island, centrally located in major maritime trading routes, Sri Lanka had been under colonial occupation since the 16th century, first under the Portuguese, then the Dutch and finally the British from 1796 until independence, the whole island coming under British control in 1815 with the subjugation of the Kingdom of Kandy (Castañeda Dower, et al., 2017).

Over centuries the country had been subject to immigration and, in the north of the island, just 22 miles from the coast of Tamil Nadu in southern India, a Tamil-speaking population is in the majority (Castañeda Dower et al. 2017). Of the total Tamil population, 56% live in the south of the country (Nanayakkara, 2008). It was under the British that the plantation regime, with the production of tea and rubber for export, and the import of cheap Tamil labour from India to work in the plantation sector, was established and it remained a major driver of the economy during the early years of independence (Little and Hettige, 2013).

De Silva (1986), in his comprehensive study of ethnic tensions between 1880 and 1985, discusses the history of these tensions and periods of unrest over many years and the complexity of those tensions and rivalries and the enormous difficulties of their management.

De Silva distinguishes between two main ethnic groups, distinctive through their language, culture and religion, the Buddhist Sinhalese and the Hindu Tamil.

Pre-independence UK adopted a divisive policy between the Tamils and Sinhalese. In the 1833 Constitution, representation was by ethnicity rather than political ideology. The Sinhalese were generally against British rule (Nanayakkara, 2008). The UK itself, Nanayakkara argues, favoured the Tamils, especially in education, as illustrated by the fact that in 1885, of 819 schools in the country (40% of the education budget), 300 were in Tamil-majority Jaffna (5% of the population).

The British colonial administration exercised its control and revenue collection through a state bureaucracy where the lower rungs of the workforce were local and recruited largely on the basis of their educational qualifications and English language skills, and hence were open to the urban elite far more than the rural poor. State sector employment was aspired to by upwardly mobile youth before and after independence. The route to this secure and relatively well-paid employment was through education. As a result, education and the fairness of the educational system became a hotly contested concern within the country (Little and Hettige, 2013).

In the 1930s the Donoughmore Commission on constitutional reform brought self-government to the Crown colony of Ceylon and the perception within the country that democracy was a means to influence the distribution of resources between ethnic groups (Wickramasinghe, 2012). Within this context the colonial authorities' reliance on English speakers, while, according to Castañeda Dower et al. (2017) making no widespread efforts to educate the population in English, led to large differences in economic and political opportunities (Castañeda Dower, et al. 2017). English became the language of the elites, both Tamil and Sinhalese. At the time of independence about 80% of the population spoke only one language, with roughly 60% speaking Sinhalese only and 20% speaking Tamil with the rest being bilingual with English (Castañeda Dower et al., 2017). In the census of 2012 most of the Sinhalese population were Buddhists (70%) together with Hindu Tamil (12.6%), Muslim (9.7%) and Christian (7.4%) populations mainly speaking Tamil (Department of Census and Statistics Sri Lanka, 2018).

While the move to independence in Sri Lanka was generally peaceful in comparison to India, Pakistan and Burma, it remained a process filled with ethno-linguistic tensions (Kumarasingham, 2013). Sri Lanka negotiated independence rather than fought for it and the country maintained core Westminster institutions and conventions following independence (Kumarasingham, 2013). The Sri Lankan political elite adopted the largely symbolic, ceremonial culture of 'dignified' British institutions, 'not only Britain but the Sri Lankan political elite sought continuity for the new dominion' (Kumarasingham, 2013, p. 115). Strong identification with the UK and doing things the British way was the approach followed by the new independent government. Most of the new Cabinet had been educated in the UK and, of the first four prime ministers, all went to two of Colombo's leading private schools and all studied at Oxford and gained their political training in the pre-independence

legislature. The Cabinet memberships were all from same high-status and wealthy class though ethnically diverse (Kumarasingham, 2013).

Following independence, a continuing debate in post-colonial Sri Lanka has been of how to reconcile globalisation with localisation and a distinct cultural identity which often refers to a 'glorious past' of Sinhalese society and the Kingdom of Kandy. This led to an approach known as 'Jathika Chinthanaya' (national thinking), which was about creating a transcendent Sinhalese-Buddhist 'umbrella culture' (Hennayake, 2006). This contributed to an ethno-linguistic crisis between the Sinhalese and Tamil while also seeing the continuation of an English-speaking elitist intelligentsia in the post-colonial period (Hennayake, 2006).

In 1956 the Sinhala language was made the official language, the start of a period when the state became perceived as bestowing goods and services selectively leading to the creation of a 'post 1956 generation' with Sinhalese and Tamil youth educated in two separate language streams growing to think and feel as two distinct communities (Wickramasinghe, 2012). This same enabling legislation (the Sinhala Only Act of 1956) also barred access to HE and public positions for citizens who were not fluent in Sinhala. According to Castañeda Dower et al. (2017), this linguistic disenfranchisement disrupted clientelistic networks formed in colonial times which took advantage of members' English language fluency. In Sri Lanka this policy led to a decline in the political and economic returns to both Tamil and English languages, and contributed to the divisions between the two major ethnic groups, Sinhalese and Tamil (Castañeda Dower et al., 2017).

In 1972, a new constitution changed the name of the country from Ceylon to Sri Lanka, and also allowed for affirmative action on a linguistic basis whereby the Sinhalese benefited from a grade weighting system for university admission. While nearly 50% of university admissions in engineering and medicine were of the Tamil ethno-linguistic group in 1969, by 1974 this was cut to 16% in engineering and 26% in medicine (Castañeda Dower, et al, 2017). The admissions schemes were condemned as straying away from principles of merit and fairness and moving away from the post-independence role of the state as an impartial dispenser of social justice. Opposition to the admissions scheme was strong, especially from Tamils (Wickramasinghe, 2012).

Castañeda Dower et al., (2017) argue that the Sri Lankan civil war, a conflict that lasted over 30 years, had its origin in the use of ethnic identity for political, economic and cultural purposes under colonialism and that, post-independence, this ethno-linguistic legacy continues to impact on Sri Lankan society including HE.

HE provision in Sri Lanka began in the colonial era with the foundation of the Ceylon Medical School (1870), Colombo Law College (1875), Ceylon School of Agriculture (1884), Government Technical College (1893) and the Ceylon University College in 1921, affiliated to the University of London. The purpose of these institutions was to serve the colonial state, and their students were from the elites of both the Sinhalese and Tamil population (Jayasundara, 2014). In 1948 (the year of independence) the University of Ceylon was founded. At the time most students were urban, English-medium educated and Western-

oriented. Between 1948 and 1966 the composition changed remarkably, with Sinhalese Buddhists increasing their share of places from 43% to 74%, while Christians decreased their share from 41% to 7%, the balance in both cases being Hindu or Muslim Tamil speakers (Little and Hettige, 2013).

Throughout the post-colonial period, education, while considered highly successful in terms of national literacy rates, has remained a source of ethnic tension, has seen both reform and unrest, and been subject to changes in government policy. After more than 30 years of economic liberalism, policy today chimes with The World Bank's vision of education and development, and the country is seeking to become a knowledge hub and link between the East and West (Little and Hettige, 2013).

Today, there are 15 state universities in Sri Lanka (University Grants Committee, Sri Lanka, 2018). Since the University Act 1999 a few additional institutes have been given permission to grant their own degrees, the most prominent being the government owned Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology but no new universities have been established (Ministry of Higher Education, Sri Lanka, 2018).

The University Grants Commission (UGC), under the Ministry of Higher Education, is the governing body of the university system in Sri Lanka, established on 22nd December 1978 under the Universities Act of the same year. The functions of the UGC are: planning and coordination of university education, allocation of funds to HEIs, maintenance of academic standards, regulation of the administration of HEIs and regulation of admission of students to HEIs (University Grants Commission, Sri Lanka, 2018).

HE is free for students in state universities, and hence competition is high for places. Approximately 140,000 students complete advanced (A level) studies in secondary education each year and seek university places. There are currently 27,000 places available in state universities (British Council, 2014). It is this gap between state university places and eligible applicants for HE that is of concern to the government and which has driven the recent growth in TNE.

In recent years the Sri Lankan rupee has depreciated against other currencies, making study abroad more difficult financially. In 2014, approximately 3,750 Sri Lanka students were studying degree programmes in the UK; however over 12,000 are studying UK programmes in Sri Lanka (British Council, 2014). Sri Lanka is late to the issue of regulatory control over TNE which is currently an issue of debate and policy development. The web pages of the Sri Lankan Ministry of Education provide full information on the state university sector but there is no record of the private sector, which is largely unregulated (Little and Hettige, 2013). While private sector institutions currently have no degree-awarding powers themselves, they can offer diplomas, either unaccredited or through accrediting bodies such as the Scottish Qualifications Agency. Private sector institutions can also offer degrees through TNE provision with mainly UK universities, and it is this opportunity that has led to the growth of TNE in the country.

According to a recent report it would appear that over 27 UK HEIs are involved in 52 collaborative provision activities in Sri Lanka (British Council, 2014). This research examines the quality assurance process in TNE provision between a single UK provider and two Sri Lanka institutions.

In 2014 the Sri Lankan government outlined plans to further open up its HE system to private overseas investors. It aimed to attract 50,000 international students and 10 foreign university campuses by 2020 (Duncan, 2014). Dr Sunil Jayantha Navaratne, Secretary for Sri Lanka's Higher Education Ministry, explained at the time that 'we are opening up our market for the good quality higher education institutes,' and that Sri Lanka hopes to make HE one of its six biggest exports in future alongside tourism, aviation, naval bases, energy and research hubs. This aspiration will be met by a growth in the private sector and TNE via foreign campuses. Navaratne reportedly said 'At the same time we have to regulate for quality, therefore we're going to introduce a qualification framework, policy and accreditation system for our country and we are in the process of developing the legal framework for those institutes' (quoted in Duncan, 2014).

According to Little and Hettige (2013), since 1977 and the adoption of economic liberalisation policies a 'predominantly publicly funded education system ranging from primary schools to universities has given way to a more diversified educational structure of public and private institutions at different levels' (p. 232).

In 2017, The World Bank announced a \$100 million investment in financing to support Sri Lanka's HE system with objectives to increase enrolment in priority disciplines, improve the quality of degree programmes and promote research and innovation in the HE sector announced as 'a first of its kind results-driven operation in support of the Government's Higher Education Development Strategy' and due to be implemented in the period to 2023 (The World Bank, 2017).

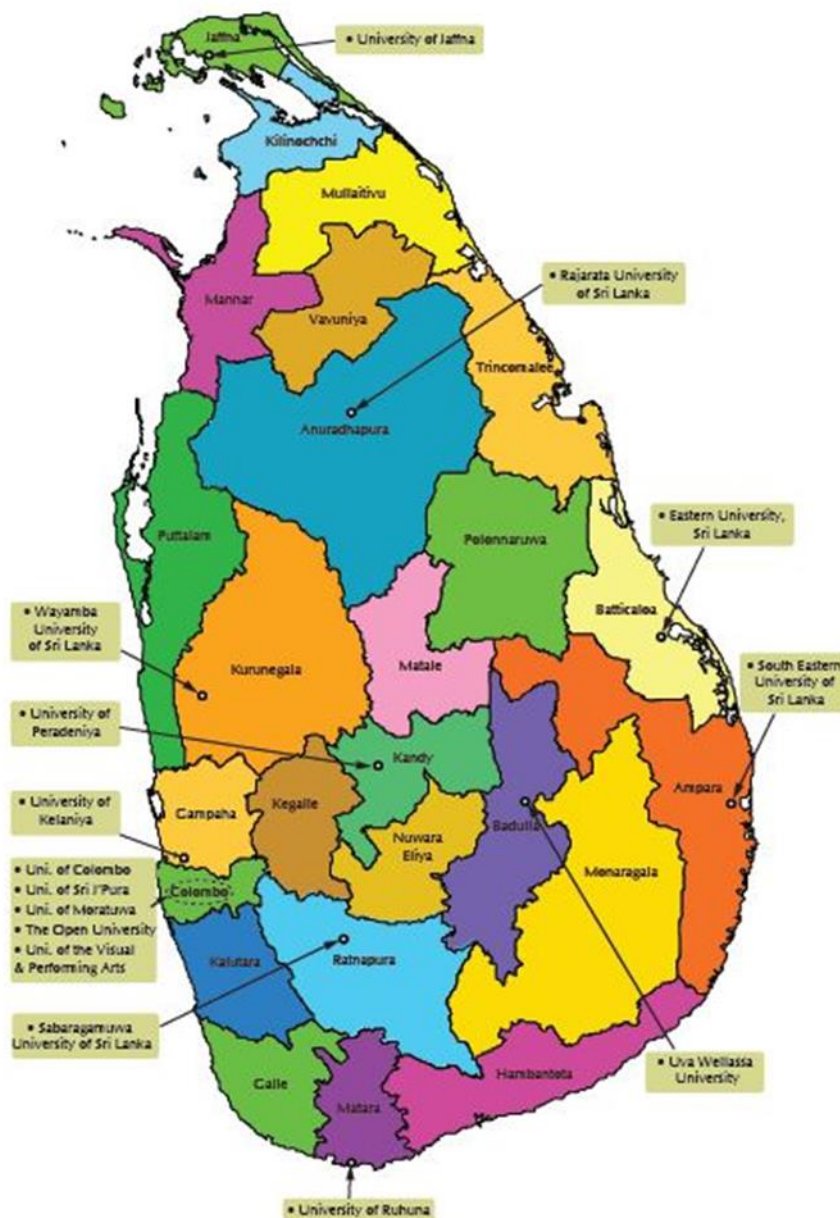


Figure 2.5 Location of universities in Sri Lanka (University Grants Commission Sri Lanka, 2016)

This review of HE in Sri Lanka provides the context for the research study. Further details on the institutions involved in the research are provided in Chapter 3.

2.8 Development of a conceptual framework

A conceptual framework derived from the literature review is presented here for the purpose of ordering the material discussed as relevant and for developing the research design. For the purpose of this research, it is argued that TNE is intrinsically concerned with inter-organisational relationships. Quality assurance must be approached as a process where no assumptions can be made as to the existence of shared meaning and understandings.

The concept of relational capital has been identified as one which focuses on inter-organisational relationships and helps to understand critical factors that build relational capital over time. Relational competences, essentially regarding communication, have been argued to be part of the organisational repertoire to build relational capital. Relational competencies held by individuals contribute to the relational competences of the organisation.

As TNE is intrinsically cross-cultural, the literature of inter-cultural communication points to an additional set of individual competencies, those of inter-cultural communication. Through both relational and inter-cultural competencies, it is argued, shared meanings, essential for the purpose of achieving quality assurance in TNE, can be developed

Figure 2.7 represents an initial conceptualisation for a concept map correlating quality assurance in TNE with socialisation between individuals occupying key competence roles, and with critical relational and inter-cultural communication competencies. This conceptual framework will be discussed in the findings of this research in Chapters 5 and 6..

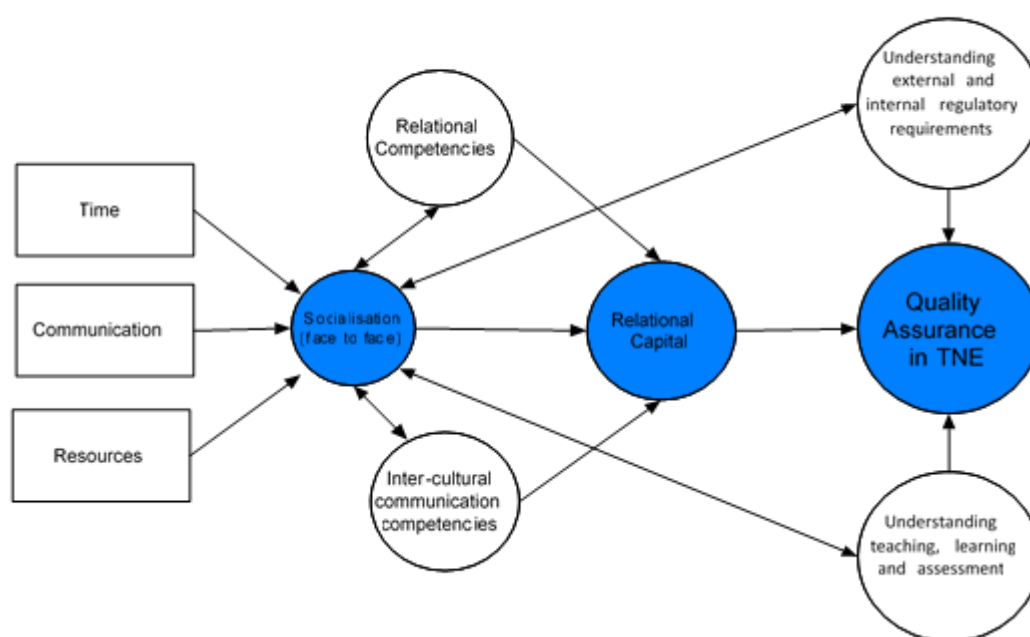


Figure 2.6 A conceptual map of quality assurance in TNE

2.9 Synopsis of the literature

This chapter has discussed four bodies of literature which have been brought together to create a conceptual model proposing a relationship between quality assurance in TNE, relational capital and socialisation.

First, the literature on TNE presents its growth as an institutional response to globalisation in HE. TNE exists amongst a portfolio of internationalisation strategies that institutions are able to develop. The scale and scope of TNE has been discussed in the context of its benefits to:

- Institutions, as principally a commercial activity.
- Students, as a relatively affordable alternative model to study abroad.
- Countries seeking to develop their economies through an educated workforce and to address an 'educational deficit'.

TNE is nevertheless contentious as it has been also argued that it represents a form of cultural imperialism that could damage the national HE systems of the host countries.

Second, the literature on quality and quality assurance has been examined and quality assurance identified as a process with a purpose articulated in the guidance and activities of the quality agencies such as the QAA and the processes of the institutions under their oversight. The purpose of quality assurance lies in ensuring the quality (in terms of teaching, learning and resources) and standards (in terms of levels of attainment) of TNE provision are equivalent between locations of delivery. In the context of TNE, quality assurance is also critical in consumer protection and in the safeguarding of the reputations of the awarding bodies. The literature on quality assurance has raised questions about the quality assurance process and whether it is now, in the UK, normalised as a process of following a series of steps in order to comply with its requirements.

The literature which critiques quality assurance also raised the power relations that exist within quality assurance, both between the state-backed quality agencies and within the institutions and the process of quality assurance, especially in the context of TNE.

Third, the relationship between the institutions engaged in TNE and quality assurance has led to an exploration of supply chain quality management (SCQM) which looks at inter-firm relationships as critical to quality in both process and product. The investigation of concepts and frameworks of value in helping understand the dynamics and key factors of relationships of supply chain management with particular relevance to TNE are relational capital and relational competencies.

Fourth, the clearly cross-cultural and inter-cultural nature of the relationship between the institutions engaged in TNE and quality assurance has led to an exploration of the literature on inter-cultural communication and inter-cultural competencies. While this literature has developed from mainly North American studies of students on study exchange programmes, there is scant evidence that it has been used to explore TNE and no sources were identified that considered inter-cultural communication and competencies in the quality assurance process in TNE, something the findings of this investigation will discuss.

The four areas of literature were brought together in the conceptual model shown in figure 2.6 above.

The next chapter describes the research approach and design of the study.

Chapter 3 Research design and methods

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes and explains the research framework, design and methods used to address the research question. Creswell argues that the choice of the research framework, within which the research design and selection of research methods takes place, should be guided by the nature of the problem to be researched (Creswell, 2013).

The problem to be researched is how do the people undertaking quality assurance in TNE understand what they are doing? TNE has been shown, in chapter 2, to be a dynamic, challenging, sometimes problematic and complex phenomenon taking place at a distance, in a cross-cultural context and inter-organisational relationship. Do people share meanings about the purpose, value and relevance of quality assurance? An exploration of their understanding of their experience will be of value in the design, implementation and management of a process seen as critical to TNE.

In this case, the focus of interest, and the level of analysis, are the institutions engaged in the TNE provision, where the global and national impinge, but where local decisions about how quality assurance is conducted, within the guidance of codes of practice, are taken. The quality of the relationship and the relational and inter-cultural competences of the staff engaged in collaborative and partnership work, has been argued, in chapter 2, to be critical to the success of inter-organisational collaboration and a conceptual model proposed. By exploring how the participants experience the process, and the relationships between each other across cultural and organisational boundaries, the research can offer insights into how the process works and into the potential value of the conceptual model.

Crotty (1998), sets out a framework for social research in response to two questions. First, what methodologies and methods will be used in the research? Second, how is the choice and use of methodologies and methods justified? The answer to the second question lies with the purpose of the research, the research question that the inquiry is seeking to answer.

The research question is: how is transnational education and its processes of quality assurance understood and enacted within the institutions engaged in the provision? It is therefore essential that, to address the research question, the views and attitudes of the people engaged in the provision must be explored to help understand how they themselves understand what they are doing, why they are doing it and what they think is important in the process of quality assurance. The research method which will be employed is that of the interview.

In order to justify the choice of method, it is important to consider and align the research question with philosophical assumptions regarding the nature of reality or the ontology. In social research, methods of inquiry are tied to different views or assumptions on how social reality should be studied (Bryman, 2016). Cohen et al., (2018), drawing on Burrell and Morgan (1979), summarise this position through asking whether social reality is ‘out there’,

in the world, or created by one's own mind. In a realist position, there is a world independent of the individual and in which the researcher can observe, discover relationships and causal explanations. In an alternative, nominalist position, objects of thought are merely words and there is no independently accessible thing constituting the meaning of a word (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 5).

Epistemology is the theoretical perspective, towards knowledge and 'how we know what we know', and what kinds of knowledge are possible and how they are acquired (Crotty, 1998, p. 8). According to Cohen et al. (2018), how one aligns oneself in this particular debate profoundly affects how one will go about uncovering knowledge of social behaviour. To see knowledge as personal, subjective and unique, rather than hard, objective and tangible, subscribes the researcher to the non-positivist position. From this position the search for understanding is concerned with 'an understanding of the way in which individuals and social groups create, modify and interpret the world in which they find themselves' (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 6).

Crotty proposed a constructivist epistemology, arguing that 'there is no meaning without a mind. Meaning is not discovered but constructed...different people construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon' (Crotty, 1998, p. 8). Crotty argues that the constructivist position within social research holds that all meaningful reality is constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context. Human beings therefore engage with a world they are interpreting in order to construct meaning. Interpretivism is a theoretical approach within constructivist epistemology which 'looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world' (Crotty, 1998, p. 67).

This research design aligns with the idea that the operation of quality assurance in TNE is a social behaviour with multiple realities created through social construction, based on the subjective experience of individuals. This position, leads to a research design which is conducted with those participants in order to report their multiple realities (Cresswell, 2013). This approach accepts the subjective experiences of people as acceptable knowledge and reports it as such.

Cohen et al., (2018) describe the interpretative position as a paradigm, with the same rigour as the natural sciences, by emphasising how people differ from physical objects. This paradigm espouses the view that the social world consists of ideas and those ideas do not exist independently of those that hold them. They establish some distinguishing features across the 'various hues' of interpretative approaches, in summary:

- People are deliberate and creative in their actions, they act intentionally and make meanings in and through their activities;
- People actively construct their social world;
- Situations are fluid and changing rather than fixed and static; events and behaviour change over time and are richly affected by context;
- Events and individuals are largely non-generalizable;

- People interpret events, contexts and situations and act on the basis of those events;
- There are multiple interpretations of, and perspectives on, single events and situations
- Reality is multi-layered and complex;
- Many events are not reducible to simplistic interpretations;

Cohen et al., (2018)

From this follows the position that multiple realities exist, that what is being researched is context-specific and that the researcher is part of the world they are researching. This has implications for the choice of problem, the formulation for the research question to be answered, the kind of data collected and how that data is treated. Research is the search for meaning and relationships and the discovery of their consequences for social action (Cohen et al., 2018). There are also implications for how we might understand society and organisations and social change.

The interpretative approach has its critics and it is often contrasted unfavourably with the objective positivist approach. The researcher depends on their own personal knowledge for interpretation and analysis of the data and have to face judgements of plausibility, validity, reliability, and credibility. The task is to protect the research from the negative effects of subjectivity, something that can be achieved through reflexivity, discussed later in this thesis (Cohen et al., 2018).

3.2 Research design

This research design has a social constructivism/interpretative epistemological framework as it is argued that in such a dynamic phenomenon (growth of TNE, quality assurance of TNE) and context (multiple level, cross-cultural and dynamic relationships between individuals within institutions engaged in the management of TNE provision and its quality assurance process), there will be multiple perspectives and ‘realities’ constructed and held by the key stakeholders.

It is argued that an understanding of these perspectives is crucial to understanding the practice and outcomes of quality assurance in TNE at the institutional and relational level. From such insights, into the attitudes and practices of those enacting the quality assurance process, it is argued that the investigation will be able to propose an understanding of the quality assurance process in TNE reflected in a conceptual framework developed from one context but with potential value in others. This may include positions on quality assurance as accountability and compliance and as learning and improvement. In order to explore the subjective experiences of people and, when the objective of a research question is to explore a subject, Creswell advises that a qualitative study is best used, as variables are not easily identified in advance (Creswell, 2013).

3.3 Qualitative research

Qualitative research ‘is a research strategy that that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data’ (Bryman, 2016, p. 394).

Alvesson and Deetz (2000) argue that qualitative, or interpretative research, aims at understanding the micro-practices of everyday life. While they report its association with many different theoretical perspectives, it is typically oriented to socially constructed reality, focusing on meanings, ideas and practices.

Flick argues that qualitative research is intended to approach the world 'out there' and to 'understand, describe and sometimes explain social phenomena 'from the inside' (Flick, 2007, p. ix). This it does through analysing the experiences of individuals and groups, their practices, interactions and communications and the documents that trace those practices, experiences and interactions. Thus, we seek to find meaningful and 'rich insights' by unpicking how people construct the world around them. Methods within a qualitative research design should recognise this and be open enough to allow understanding of a process or relation. Flick states that appropriateness to the specific field or issue to be researched is the guiding principle for a decision to adopt a qualitative research design (Flick, 2007).

The evolving nature of the higher education environment, and the growth in TNE, have received much attention in terms of recounting the scale of that growth, the drivers behind it and the issues it raises for quality assurance in the provider institutions/sending countries (British Council 2013, HEGlobal 2016; QAA, 2013). However, there has been a 'relative absence of attention given to host countries in the transnational education literature' (British Council, 2013, p. 8). This research is seeking insights into the quality assurance process in TNE in both the host country and the provider country, through investigating the experiences of those engaged in it.

Methodology is a theory of how inquiry should proceed. It comprises the research plan including the choice and use of particular methods and links to desired outcomes. Different methodological traditions have developed in response to a need for a way to tackle a particular type of research problem (Bryman, 2016).

3.4 Case study inquiry

The research methodology adopted is the case study approach in which quality assurance within three institutions engaged in TNE will be explored. Cohen, et al. (2018) argue that case studies are an important source of research data but note that almost any social science research could be a 'case'. They point out that definitions of what comprises a case study are a 'contested terrain' and that arriving at a single definition of case study is elusive and unnecessary (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 375).

Cresswell (2013) views case study research as a methodology; a type of design in qualitative research that may be the object of the study as well as the product of the inquiry. In case study research the investigator explores a 'real-life contemporary bounded system (a case)' through detailed in-depth data collection (Cresswell. 2013, p. 97). The unit of analysis may be a single case (within-site study) or multiple cases (multi-site study). Denscombe (2014) argues that for something to qualify for case study research it must have some distinctive identity to allow it to be studied separately from its context otherwise it would simply blend into other social phenomena and cannot be viewed as a case. In summary a case needs to be a

fairly self-contained entity and a 'case' needs to have fairly distinct boundaries (Denscombe, 2014). While a case study provides a unique example of real people in real situations and can penetrate situations in ways that are not susceptible to numerical analysis, it is equally important to set the case within its context (Cohen et al., 2018). In this case, both the post-colonial setting and the higher education in Sri Lanka contexts, will be important in the interpretation of the findings.

Case study research can be applied in different epistemological orientations, for example interpretivist or realist. As part of an interpretivist approach, the case study approach can acknowledge multiple realities having multiple meanings (Gerring, 2004; Gerring, 2007; Yin, 2014). This research will explore the views of the key stakeholders in the process of quality assurance, the relationships between people from the institutions, and explore their understanding and perceptions and any differences that might be held between those at the provider and host institutions.

John Gerring states that the case study approach is most usefully defined as: 'an intensive study of a single unit or a small number of units (the cases), for the purpose of understanding a larger class of similar units (a population of cases with an aim to generalise across a larger set of units' (Gerring, 2007 p. 37). Gerring states that 'the product of a good case study is insight' specified as 'finding things out' (2007, p.7).

For Denscombe (2014) case study research is focused on relationships and processes within social settings and is well suited to research objectives that explore key issues. Cohen et al. (2018) provide some key hallmarks or characterisations of case study research. These include: it is concerned with a rich and vivid description of events relevant to the research inquiry; it focuses on individual actors and seeks to understand their perceptions; it focuses on processes, interactions and relationships; it blends description with analysis.

Bloor and Wood refer to a case study as 'an exploration of a 'bounded system' (2006, p. 27). TNE is, by definition, inter-organisational and so too are the key relationships intrinsic to TNE which means the boundary for the case will need to include more than one institution. In this study the proposed 'single units' (Gerring, 2007) are the institutions engaged in the quality assurance of collaborative provision in Sri Lanka, grouped together into a bounded case. The 'larger class of similar units' (Gerring, 2007) are the TNE collaborations between UK institutions and host institutions.

In this research the bounded system considered as one case, is one UK HEI (UWE) conducting TNE quality assurance in Sri Lanka with separate two separate local HEIs.

Within the case there are two primary relationships between UWE which runs TNE provision with each of the two institutions in Sri Lanka. The two institutions in Sri Lanka are each aware of the other's relationship with UWE but have no direct relationship. Exploring how each of the two Sri Lankan institutions separately experience and perceive the quality assurance process with UWE will enable the research to identify whether any issues or perspectives are linked to a particular institution and what influencing factors might exist, if that is the case. This is not a comparative design which would entail studying contrasting

cases using ‘more or less identical methods’ (Bryman, 2012 p. 72). There however may be degrees of contrast between the two Sri Lankan institutes including years of operation, model of TNE, institutional governance, and scale (number of students, programmes) which the findings will consider if they appear to impact on quality assurance or illustrate fundamental similarities or differences that impact on the understanding and perspectives of the individuals at those institutions.

The decision to select Sri Lanka as the location for the case investigation is, in the first instance, for pragmatic reasons. I work with both the institutions and therefore make regular visits to the two institutions. This makes the data collection relatively more affordable and increases the likelihood of access to the data at the Sri Lankan institutions. Sri Lanka is also a country planning growth in TNE in the country (British Council, 2014; Senaratne, R., 2012; UNESCO, 2007) and is one of the top ten countries, in terms of student numbers, with whom UK HEIs have developed TNE, as identified in chapter 2.

The following figure shows the three institutions with their intersections. Both Sri Lankan institutions have a TNE relationship with the UKHEI (UWE). Both Sri Lankan institutions have the common context of HE in Sri Lanka although the research respondents may have different perceptions of that context. The final intersection for all three institutions is the focus of this study, quality assurance and how it is understood and conducted in this case.

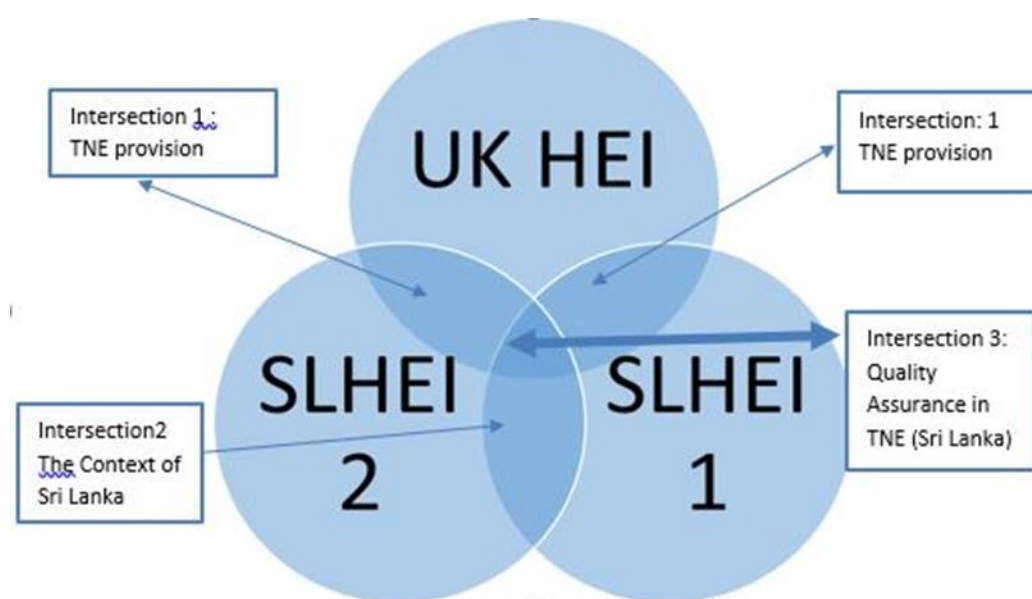


Figure 3.1 The case study as a bounded case

Data collection in case study research should aim to catch the rich detail of the participants lived experiences, thoughts about, and feelings for a situation (Cohen et al., 2013). Data should be captured systematically and rigorously and the analysis should avoid a series of low level banal detail in favour of in-depth, rigorous analysis of the whole picture. Case study analysis should also avoid including only what people agree on (Nisbet and Watt, 1984, cited in Cohen et al., 2018).

A key feature of interpretive case study research is its rejection of a single reality; rather there are multiple realities operating in a situation and the researcher's interpretation is one of many. For that reason, the researcher must address reflexivity (Cohen et al., 2018).

While Bryman (2016) suggests that it can also be argued that the case can be an object of interest in its own right, it is often argued that a methodological weakness of the case study approach is that of the problem of generalisation (Yin, 2014). The exploration of how quality assurance is undertaken, fall partly into Yin's category of a 'revelatory' case, where there is value in conducting a case study 'because the descriptive information alone will be revelatory', and partly into Yin's category of a representative case study where a broad issue is explored through a sample population (Yin, 2014, p. 54). An interpretative case study however can be argued to offer 'analytic' generalisability which can help researchers understand similar cases, phenomena or situations (Yin, 2014).

There will remain a question as to whether the findings of the study can be generalised across TNE provision, and this is a limitation of the proposed design, however it may identify issues in the dynamics of quality assurance that apply where systems originating in one country are introduced into another country through the institutions engaged in TNE. From this, it may be the case that the understanding of quality assurance in TNE in Sri Lanka in this case, and how it is implemented, conducted and improved, is valuable across a wider population of provision and a wider range of contexts and countries.

The choice of a case study approach therefore satisfied the research question's requirements of a methodology that enables exploration of meaning and understanding in a specific institutional context, as well as the practical and pragmatic concerns of conducting research in TNE which, by its very nature, is challenging in terms of access and commercial sensitivities.

3.5 The qualitative interview

The method employed in this research is the qualitative interview. King and Horrocks (2010) distinguish the characteristics of the qualitative interview as being flexible and open-ended, tending to focus on people's experiences and the relationship between interviewer and interviewee. In addition, the qualitative interview comes with a high level of anonymity and confidentiality.

Bryman considers the interview as the most widely employed method in qualitative research. While interviews can be used in quantitative inquiry, in qualitative research the interest is in the interviewee's point of view (Bryman, 2016). In qualitative interviews an interviewer generates talk with an interviewee or interviewees for the purposes of eliciting spoken, rather than written data, to examine research problems, through 'questions' and 'answers' as a basic conversational sequence (Roulston, 2010).

The qualitative research interview will typically 'resemble guided conversations rather than structured queries', and while a consistent line of inquiry is pursued, the questions themselves should be fluid rather than rigid (Yin, 2014, p. 110). While the questions of the interview are

established by the researcher in terms of the research question, the interview also allows for follow-up questions, ideally using the participant's own words, rather than summing up the interviewer's understanding, for example: 'you mentioned.....could you tell me more about that?' (Roulston, 2017, p. 5).

Roulston (2017) argues that research interviews, as a method, rely on researchers selecting participants based on a particular collectivity with an associated corpus of knowledge about which they are called on to speak. People have primary rights to knowledge about their own experiences and telling about those experiences. The interviewee is assumed to have greater knowledge and authority to telling about his or her personal experiences than the interviewer. Assertions that begin with 'I think,' 'I heard,' and 'I know' index different knowledge states pertaining to any particular topic (Roulston, 2017, p.1).

Many researchers use interviews as a sole method of data generation. According to Roulston and Choi (2018), this approach works well if the research purpose is to learn about people's beliefs, perspectives, and meaning-making. If research questions focus on generating facts about events or what people do, using interviews as a single method can be problematic, since people may recall details inaccurately (Roulston and Choi, 2018) however this is not the objective of this research.

For this research, intent on exploring how participants experience the social world and make meaning of their life experiences, the use of interviews as the sole method is appropriate although the use of interviews does require caution (Silverman, 2013). Alvesson (2010) argues that viewing interviews as a superior technique for 'tapping knowing subjects' for knowledge about their experiences and/or social practices neglects the interview situation as a socially and linguistically complex situation (p.4). For Alvesson, 'interview talk may say more about role-playing and adapting to social standards in the name of impression management – including how to appear authentic – than about how people really feel or what social reality is really like' (Alvesson, 2010, p. 3). This is an issue for this research, with all respondents being known to me in my professional capacity.

Additionally, Alvesson (2010) notes that interview accounts may be seen as the outcomes of political considerations, script-following and the operation of discourses governing their responses, all features of social and organisational life. He suggests that many research reports seem to assume that these are absent or can be minimized through the good practice of the researcher. He argues it is important not to simplify and idealize the interview situation and not to assume that the interviewee is primarily a competent and moral truth teller, producing the data needed to reveal the 'interiors' of the interviewees experiences, feelings, and values or the practices of social institutions (Alvesson, 2010).

In response to these problems and limitations of interviews, Alvesson (2010) advocates what he calls a reflexivity approach to interview research. This requires the researcher to acknowledge, as fully as possible, the complexity and uncertainty of the research practice and to realize that any meaning pulled out of interviews, for example, is contestable.

There is considerable focus, in the method literature, on how to conduct and manage the interview situation to make it as rational and productive as possible through effective interviewer behaviour to allow interviewees to open up and be authentic (see for example Bell & Waters, 2014). For Alvesson (2010) these tactical considerations should be broadened to consider the interview as a complex social setting that the interviewer may be unable to control and with the implication that the researcher needs to be aware of the dynamics of the interaction of which s/he is a part. In doing so the researcher needs to adopt a position of reflexivity, not only to the position of the 'researcher-self and its significance for the research process' also to the interview situation, the interviewee and the accounts produced (Alvesson, 2010 p. 106). This means that for Alvesson research results may also be multiple in character. One can point to several possible interpretations informed by reflexive considerations of how the empirical material can be interpreted.

The outcome of the interview stage is data in the form of transcripts to be analysed and reflected upon in the development of the research findings in response to the research question.

3.6 The case organisations

3.6.1 University of the West of England, Bristol.

The University of the West of England (UWE) is a post-1992 university located in Bristol, UK. It is organised into four academic faculties and professional services. The University engages in a range of collaborative partnerships both in the UK and internationally.

UWE has developed TNE provision on the franchise model since the late 2000s and now has over 6,000 students enrolled at seventeen TNE partners in a range of countries including Cyprus, Finland, Hong Kong SAR, Ireland, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, Oman, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Vietnam (UWE 2018c).

At the time of writing (2018) UWE does not have an internationalisation strategy in terms of an explicit strategy produced as the outcome of consideration of the University's approach to and response to the internationalisation agenda. There is no senior designated international role at pro, deputy or assistant Vice-Chancellor level, the senior management and leadership team of the University (UWE, 2018d). Responsibility for international issues belongs in the portfolios of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, for collaborative provision, and the Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience, for international recruitment.

International recruitment work is the responsibility of the International Office, a centralised professional services directorate reporting to the Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience.

Internationalisation activities are seen as the remit of the faculties, each led by an Executive Dean with a number of Associate Deans and departments. A number of faculty wide directors report to the Associate Deans including myself as Director, International Partnerships. I report to the Deputy Dean, Resources. Each faculty differs in terms of how it organises itself.

UWE's current Strategy 2020 has four priorities, one of which is 'strategic partnerships, connections and networks' (UWE, 2018e). Within this priority there are four objectives two of which, the first and fourth, can be considered to include TNE:

- building effective national and international collaborations with schools, colleges, universities and other partners to raise young people's aspirations and attainment, and encourage and support their progression to higher education, and to UWE Bristol.
- leading the way in our engagement with diverse communities of practice, public organisations and individuals, maximising the potential of the talent base in UWE Bristol and the Bristol city-region.
- developing high quality, tailored professional support for our business partners, working with key regional and national organisations in our areas of expertise, and leading high impact networks to promote economic growth, sustainability and social enterprise in our city, region and beyond.
- taking a proactive and systematic approach to developing strategic links that differentiate our academic activity and enhance the global reputation, health, sustainability and prosperity of the University, Bristol and our wider region.

(UWE, 2018e)

The following account is written from my own experience in my role as Director, International Partnerships. UWE's first TNE project was established in 2004 in Malaysia with a franchise programme in business. The growth of TNE, since then, has been cautious and dependent on the decision of each faculty within which the degree programme(s) is located. During my time in post TNE opportunities have arisen from direct approaches from colleges and universities, usually mediated through the International Office. I have been in my current role since 2012 and, in that time, the faculty has grown its TNE from one project in Hong Kong to seven, all in Asia. In that time TNE in two further institutions were brought to an end, one on the grounds of economic viability and the other on the grounds of quality concerns. During the same time the faculty have also not progressed a substantial number of requests for TNE discussions with potential partners.

The faculty have established, over time, four criteria for developing TNE. These are not published, however I can summarise them from the position of my role in the faculty and in their development. They are:

- Economic viability: the project must cover its costs, preferably from year one and generate a surplus which can be used to support the second criteria.
- Internationalisation of the student experience: use the surplus to support internationalisation opportunities for UK students (and staff) through short, subsidised study visits.
- Reputation protection: a criterion to protect the reputation of the University. Application of this risk based criterion is applied both to the international institution and its country location. For instance, a high reputation overseas institution may enhance UWE's reputation with positive impacts on recruitment and partnership

activities. Using the same criterion, the faculty have decided not to engage in TNE opportunities in Myanmar.

- Organisational capacity: the ability and appetite of the faculty's departments in terms of the resources and skilled individuals required to fully support the provision with specific attention given to the quality assurance requirements.

The business side of TNE is based on the degree provider receiving a percentage of the fees taken per student per year at the host institution. The fee to UWE would typically be 20-40%. As part of the decision-making for TNE, a business planning tool uses projected income set against estimated full economic costs over best and worst-case scenarios for a project period of 5 years.

While TNE can be seen as a diversification of income stream, it comes at a cost which is not simply financial. The requirements of the TNE provision can divert resources away from more pressing requirements concerning the core business of the students on campus in the UK. As a consequence, I observe that there has been a more questioning approach to TNE in recent years and I feel a sense that the demands of TNE have created a problematic narrative around the provision which will be discussed in the findings of the research.

If a decision to proceed is taken by the faculty then a due diligence process is undertaken prior to a decision to approve or reject the proposal made by the university committee chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for that purpose. Application of the above criteria has meant the faculty have embarked on just one new TNE project in the last two-year period, 2016-18.

UWE operates the majority of its TNE through the same academic regulations and quality management and enhancement framework. The only exceptions are dual degrees which operate under amended regulations (UWE 2018a).

The quality assurance process is operated centrally with a dedicated team of partnership staff in professional services (Academic Services). The process of quality assurance is clearly set out in internal documentation and comprises a process in which all assessments are set by a module leader, moderated by an academic peer, and moderated by an external examiner before approval. This is conducted before the work is set for the students. The same process is followed after the assessment has been taken by the students through the marking and moderation of a sample of student work. Marks are then agreed at Field Board before decisions for individual students are considered at an Award board prior to the release of the marks to students (UWE 2018a). The module leader who sets the assessment is responsible for the delivery of the module. It is therefore the module leader at the TNE partner who sets the module assessments, with support from the UWE module leader, and the UWE module leader who is the moderator. The external examiner for the module is the same person wherever the module is delivered and they are required to write a report on their confidence in the quality and standards of the modules they have responsibility for.

The UK Quality Assurance Agency undertook an academic review of UWE in 2015 and found, in their judgements about standards and quality, that UWE met UK expectations in the four criteria, namely the setting and maintenance of the academic standards of awards, the

quality of student learning opportunities, the quality of the information about learning opportunities, and, the enhancement of student learning opportunities. In addition, they commended the breadth and strength of partnerships as good practice (QAA, 2015a). With regards to TNE, the review concluded 'the review team consider that the University's arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with collaborative partners are supported by effective policies and operational management which ensures that processes are implemented securely and managed effectively' (QAA 2015a, p. 43).

Each TNE project has a designated UWE Partnership Lead. This is a senior academic manager in the faculty with lead responsibility for the partnership and its strategic direction and with responsibilities that also include ensuring the quality and standards of the programme delivery and assessment at the partner (UWE, 2013). The partnership lead is required to write an annual report to the university's Collaborative Provision Committee which has oversight of all the university's TNE provision.

In 2014-15 the University introduced Partnership Boards as the formal point of contact between the University and each TNE partners to provide a forum for monitoring the operation of the partnership, a risk register, adherence to an Operations Manual unique to each TNE partner, and any issues or concerns. The Partnership Boards are held regularly by video conference.

The other key academic role at UWE, for each TNE partner, is the link tutor. The link tutor is an academic that is the lead contact for the relationship with the partner programme manager. For the first of the two Sri Lankan partners, Northshore College of Business and Technology, there are four link tutors for each of the programmes running there. For second, City School of Architecture, there is one link tutor. The decision on how many link tutors depends on the subject discipline and the volume of modules. In the professional services team, the Senior Professional Service Officer is an operational manager and is the key equivalent to the head of professional services or registrar at the TNE partner. Their role revolves around the annual cycle of delivery and compliance with the quality assurance process.

While UWE provides the framework for the delivery of TNE, it does not specify how each TNE project should be managed. The mode and frequency of communication, the number of visits and by whom, the range of issues and how they might be addressed and decisions regarding the expansion of provision or the exit from TNE provision are left to the faculties of the university and the relevant departments within them.

In 2014 the University introduced a policy that each collaborative partner should have a Risk Register created and maintained. The Risk Register is established prior to institutional agreement for the project to go ahead and then to be reviewed annually, by both partners, through the Partnership Boards, annual monitoring reviews and the Partnership Lead report. Each risk register is unique to each collaboration. Each contains a set of agreed risks graded on the scale 1-5 on probability (likelihood it will occur) and impact. The two numbers are multiplied to produce a risk score (1-25 for each risk) which creates a risk ranking. Mitigating actions and risk ownership is agreed according to the nature of the risk.

The Sri Lanka institutions themselves are autonomous institutions which have taken strategic decisions to partner with UWE. While they are required, as part of the agreement between the institutions, to implement and abide by the same quality assurance framework and processes as operate for the UK provision management and operation, the staffing, organisation, and governance of provision will differ in each institution and generate insights and perspectives on the quality assurance process. Organisational features including differential perspectives on the purpose of quality assurance and different modes and frequency of communication between individuals over distance will occur and it is by investigating these differences that the research findings may point towards ways of improving the outcomes of those processes for TNE.

3.6.2 Northshore College of Business and Technology

Northshore College of Business and Technology (NS) is a relatively new institution, established in 2012, in a new building in north Colombo. It is a private institution, financed by a privately-owned company associated with a benefactor of Sri Lankan heritage, based outside of the country. The college is located in a new and striking building constructed to high standards. Negotiations with a number of UK institutions took place in the period before 2012. UWE and NS signed their agreement in 2012 and delivery of four programmes was established, namely BEng/MEng Electrical and Electronic Engineering, BEng/MEng Civil Engineering, BA (Hons) Business Administration, BSc (Hons) Software Engineering (Northshore College of Business and Technology, 2018).

The rationale behind the decision to partner with a UK university was based on the perceived reputation of the UK HE sector and the activity at the time of UK HEI's in Sri Lanka. It is my experience that an implicit factor in the partnering decision by the host institution is the reputation, signalled by league table position, of the provider. A search of the web sites of TNE offering colleges, including NS, indicate how league table position of the UK provider is used in the marketing of the college and used to establish the credentials of the college in that market (Northshore College of Business, 2018).

The college can be characterised as a 'start-up' with no previous academic infrastructure, staff or processes. A further advantage of TNE to the college is the provision of the curricula and teaching resources of UWE as part of the franchise relationship. The costs of the intellectual capital involved in developing degree programmes is thus avoided through the acquisition of a TNE partner who makes the material available to the local partner. For a new entrant into the HE market in a country, the value of TNE is commercially hugely valuable. They immediately have an educational product with credibility as long as the TNE model itself has credibility. The risk to the provider, in this case UWE, is that the host institution may be unable or unwilling to establish the academic and institutional infrastructure required to meet the needs of the provision, both in terms of the requirement to teach to the standards expected, and for the quality assurance process.

In the case of NS, a substantive resource input by UWE to support the development of the college and its staff has been needed in the five years of the partnership. The college has been led by a senior academic from a Sri Lankan state sector university and the majority of the

staff, both full time and short-term academic contract staff, have been recruited from the same state university. All teaching on the programmes is delivered by local staff. Each programme has a full-time programme leader and a small number of full time staff. Other teaching staff are employed on short term contracts. These staff are also employed in the state university system in Colombo and are allowed to take short term contracts in the private sector. UWE sees and approves the CV's of all staff teaching on its programmes. In more recent years, the background of the staff has become less connected to this single institution but the experience of staff remains within the state sector. Some of the staff have experienced higher education in the UK, both as a student and as members of academic staff.

The total number of students enrolled on UWE programmes in 2017 is approximately 370 (UWE 2017a). Student numbers in the first year of operation were low, at less than 20 students per programme and considerably below projected numbers.

The college is led by a Board of Directors with two members with offices on the premises and an Executive Dean, with responsibility for academic leadership and operations. Additionally, there is an academic registrar and two administrative assistants.

The provision at NS of the UWE programmes is reviewed on an annual basis with UWE committee charged with doing so for all UK and international partnerships, the Collaborative Provision Committee. The risk register for NS has 9 risks factors, the highest being with regard to student recruitment, having a 4 for probability and a 5 for impact, giving a score of 20, making it a high risk and a high priority for action.

3.6.3 City School of Architecture (CSA)

The City School of Architecture (CSA) was established in 1986 as Colombo School of Architecture. CSA had originated from a course of lectures provided by the Sri Lanka Institute of Architects (SLIA), the professional body for architecture in Sri Lanka (CSA, 2018). In order to be able to develop provision, a separate institution was established under the Board of Management of the SLIA and this was renamed City School of Architecture in 2008.

CSA secured Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) accreditation for both of its courses, the Diploma in Architectural Studies (Part 1 RIBA) and the Higher Diploma in Architecture (Part 2 RIBA) in 2011 and accredited by the Board of Architectural Education, SLIA in September 2012. Institutional credibility is through the accreditation received from these two bodies.

CSA is the only private sector institution offering architecture programmes in Sri Lanka. One state university, the University of Moratuwa, offers both undergraduate and post graduate programmes in architecture, also accredited by both the RIBA and SLIA as well as by the Commonwealth Association of Architects (CAA) (University of Moratuwa, 2018).

Having gained RIBA accreditation, CSA had been looking to develop a partnership with a UK University in order to be able to offer degree programmes to their architecture students. The RIBA and SLIA accreditation provide students with the pathway to Chartered status as

an architect. The rationale behind the award of a degree was to expand the employment and future educational opportunities for its students. It also would put CSA students into the same position as University of Moratuwa students whose architectural education was also within the framework of bachelor or master awards. With this in mind, they approached UWE in 2011 and following a process of due diligence and approval an agreement between the two institutions was signed in 2011. The agreement was reapproved for a further 5 years in 2016.

The three-year CSA Part I / Diploma in Architectural Studies contributes to the Bachelor of Architecture (Hons) awarded by UWE, Bristol, UK. The three-year CSA Part II / Higher Diploma in Architecture is offered and the credits gained contribute towards Master of Architecture and Environmental Studies awarded by UWE. CSA have never been interested in expanding their portfolio beyond the existing architecture provision.

The school is led by a Chief Executive Officer and there is a small full-time staff which includes two deputies who also have teaching and administrative responsibilities (CSA, 2018). Most of the teaching is delivered by practicing architects employed on a part-time basis, who the Head of School described to me as ‘teach and go’ staff (see Chapter 5). UWE sees and approves the CV’s of all staff teaching on its programmes.

Both CSA qualifications, and hence UWE programmes, are accredited by the Sri Lanka Institute of Architects (SLIA) and The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). The curriculum is structured and practice oriented, covering theory, design, technology and field visits enabling students to establish direct links with the architectural practices and building industry and advancing employment opportunities. UWE degree input is claimed to enhance an environment where critical thinking, creativity and innovation will be enriched leading to a professional career (CSA, 2018).

The total number of students enrolled on UWE programmes in 2017-18 is approximately 102 (UWE 2017a). Income to UWE is relatively small, however the relationship offers the opportunity for UK student visits to Sri Lanka for project work and reciprocal arrangements for Sri Lanka students, intended to start in 2019. This benefit is seen as the most important criteria to UWE and CSA for the relationship and has long been a stated objective for CSA. The risk register for CSA has 5 risks factors, the highest being with regard to student recruitment, having a 2 for probability and a 3 for impact, giving a score of 6, making it a low to medium risk.

3.7 Ethical Issues

In this study of TNE in higher education in Sri Lanka I must be alert to the fact that I am also an actor and stakeholder in the very subject of enquiry. While that drives my research interests, it also raises some ethical concerns, namely:

- Researcher identity, experience and values (biases)
- Disclosure of the researcher’s role.
- Confidentiality and trust
- Conducting research in a postcolonial context and research across borders.

3.7.1 Researcher identity, experience and values

It is recognised that a researcher will bring their own biases to a research design, indeed Marshall and Rossman (2011) argue that it is the researcher's passion and excitement that stimulate the research effort in the first place. The avoidance of bias is a part of the broader parameters of research ethics which require a 'good case study researcher...(to)..strive for the highest ethical standards while doing research' (Yin, 2014, p. 76). These include a responsibility to scholarship such as keeping up with current research, ensuring accuracy, honesty, and understanding the methodological constraints and the limitations to one's work (Yin, 2014).

I should therefore not attempt to neutralise my own values but to acknowledge them and consider their potential impact and manage them. In doing so the audience of the findings can assess whether and how those elements of identity affected the study.

In choosing to research the issue of TNE within Sri Lanka, where I work for an organisation engaged in collaborative provision, I will bring my personal biases and values to the research questions. I am explicitly assuming, in my research questions, that quality assurance in TNE in Sri Lanka is a dynamic and complex phenomenon with many variables contributing to the nature of the process and the extent to which it might be perceived to meet its objectives with regard to the quality and standard of the provision in the host location. My own experiences of implementing a quality assurance framework from the UK into a Sri Lankan context and the staff discussions with Sri Lankan colleagues, and staff development events I have delivered, all impact on my own perspectives whilst also driving the research question and design.

My role in collaborative provision and the fact that the initiative is well known in the country and is associated with a well-respected state university and its senior leadership, will also have an impact in how I am perceived by interviewees in Sri Lanka. In this respect I am also a representative of the awarding institution and, in that role, I also am associated with the power relationship inherent in the position with responsibility, with regard to the relationship between institutions, to the future of that relationship and ultimately with the future livelihoods of the Sri Lankan staff.

The use of the selected methods in researching and analysing TNE, and its impact on higher education in Sri Lanka, is an attempt to first, understand the perspectives of the participants with regard to TNE, and second, to fully explore and articulate the perceptions of quality assurance within the institutions and the issues which impact on the practice and outcome of the quality assurance process at the institutional level.

The aim is to distinguish my personal experiences from my collection of data in order to 'perceive the phenomenon freshly, as if for the first time' (Marshall and Rossman 2011 p. 97). Yin points out the danger of researcher bias in case study research whereby a case study approach is used to substantiate a preconceived position. Case study researchers are

especially prone to this because they must understand the issues beforehand and this understanding may sway them towards supportive evidence and away from contrary evidence. Indeed, there is a risk that the selection of the cases themselves is prone to selecting those that appear to display a particular orientation to the research questions (Yin, 2014). In my own case my role has involved chairing field and award boards for the provision, dealing with issues and problems associated with the provision and the quality assurance process and communicating both remotely, and in person, with the key individuals at the institutions in the case. It was however precisely this experience that drew me to the subject, to the case study organisations and to the research question.

3.7.2 Disclosure of the researcher's role

In conducting the interviews, I am ethically required to disclose my role as the partnership lead for UWE's collaborative provision with NS and the faculty director for the collaborative provision with CSA. In all cases this is known to the respondents however I need to explicitly explain this again in the interview, and recognise and reflect in my analysis of the data that my position will have an effect on the data collected.

As already discussed above, participants may have concerns about the commercial sensitivity of information, there may be hostility to the private sector or TNE, there may be questions about my motives, there may be caution about answering fully and participants may feel they are being tested about their knowledge and attitudes in some way.

In addition, the higher education system in Sri Lanka is a small one where people tend to know each other and where state university staff may simultaneously work in a number of private institutions. They may therefore be wary of making either explicit or implicit negative comments about institutions, practice and individuals. I will need to emphasise the research is being conducted as part of the DBA at the University of Bath and to ensure the participants have the fullest confidence in the confidentiality of the research.

3.7.3 Issues of confidentiality and trust

The confidentiality of the research was explicitly communicated to the participants in writing as part of the process of agreeing formal consent to participation in the interviews. This established that the interviewee's identity will be protected throughout the study, its writing up and in the final thesis. The trust of participants in the strength of that guarantee was influenced by the status of the research as being under the aegis of the University of Bath. My current standing in Sri Lanka, which I describe as supportive and developmental, in my view contributed to participants' participation in the process, although that is my assumption only.

3.7.4 Conducting research in a postcolonial context and research across borders

TNE projects are typically between HEIs in the developed 'north' and HEI's in the developing 'south'. Postcolonial theory is interested in the cultural effects of colonialism on the 'postcolonial condition' in order to legitimise social practices (Krishnaswamy, 2008). Quality assurance might be considered such a practice, as will other practices across the

range of activities in HE, including practices of teaching and learning, relationships between staff and students, relationships within HEIs especially those regarding the relative status of individuals with regard to qualifications, title, gender and age amongst other.

At the most general level the term ‘postcolonial’ is used to describe a global ‘condition’ or shift in the cultural, political and economic arrangements that arise from the experiences of European colonialism both in former colonised and colonising countries (Tikly, 1999). Tikly argues that ‘colonialism is not ‘over’ in the sense of an epochal shift, but that its modalities and effects are being transformed as a consequence of globalisation’ (Tikly, 1999, p. 606). The research findings should take account the effects of colonialism on education in colonised countries and the role of education in reproducing cultural patterns in the postcolonial period, in particular whether requirements for compliance with quality assurance process are respected or subject to resistance, and the possibility of quality assurance processes focused on an improvement in quality is an issue of relevance in this context. The extent to which TNE imposes a curriculum on the host, which might be reinforced by a quality assurance process, or the extent to which quality assurance focused on improvement can develop curricula that are more suited to the cultures and histories of the local population, will also be discussed following the presentation of findings.

The relationship between researcher and the researched, when in a cross-cultural North-South context, is one which must place the research process in a much wider socio-political context (Robinson-Pant & Singal, 2013). They refer to the case of a doctoral student from a UK university who struggled to respond to the conflicting demands of the UK university ethics committee to protect informants’ identities and the expectation of her respondents that they would gain voice through her thesis. For that reason, they suggest that part of the ethical consideration of research in a cross-cultural context is to consider how to disseminate the research in order to give the participants a voice. In this research the issue will be pertinent in terms of organisational hierarchies and dynamics and whether the research surfaces relational issues whereby the participants may be wanting me in my capacity firstly, as a researcher, and secondly as a professional representative of UWE, to take action or in some way intervene.

The Education for All (EFA) movement led by UNESCO was a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults with a focus on primary education. At the World Education Forum (Dakar, 2000), 164 governments pledged to achieve EFA and identified six goals to be met by 2015. Governments, development agencies, civil society and the private sector are working together to reach the EFA goals. The post-2015 EFA agenda continues to seek quality in teaching and learning as an imperative for social justice for developing countries and the centrality of education quality to achieving and sustaining educational expansion and benefitting individual learners and societies (Alexander, 2015; Barrett, in Tikly and Barrett, 2013).

Amongst the principles set out by Tikly and Barrett for conducting research in developing countries (although written for Africa) are that the research has an explicit value base, that it relates issues of quality to an understanding of the broader historical, socioeconomic, political

and cultural context within which they are embedded, that it seeks to empower policy makers, educators, learners and other key players through supporting their development as reflective practitioners and agents of change and that it is self-reflexive and self-critical concerning our own role as education researchers (Barrett, 2013; Tikly and Barrett, 2007; Tickly and Bond, 2013).

The research design should therefore explore more than the quality assurance process as a mechanistic process of paper trails and checking, to one of understanding meanings of quality, its relationship to teaching and learning approaches, and the relationships that build it, including how the understanding and reflexivity of those involved might be supported. In the research outcomes any insights into how to create and support the relationships that maintain and deliver quality in higher education as a mechanism for capacity building in the institution and beyond should be communicated.

Locating the research in Sri Lanka, with its former colonial status with regard to the United Kingdom, will raise questions about the influence and impact of the former colonial country on higher education and the practice of quality assurance. In such a context, while the sharing of a colonial past and the development of a higher education system within the colonial era, it would be unwise to assume shared meanings will exist as to the purpose and benefits of TNE and of such social practices as quality assurance. Care must be taken to ask open questions in interviews and not to imply any value judgements in those questions.

3.7.5 Working at my work - the issue of insider research

As has been outlined above, my own position with regard to the inquiry has been described by others as ‘insider research’ (Healey, 2017; Mercer 2007; Teusner, 2016). Insider research looks at the challenges faced by researchers investigating *the places they work in*. Mercer (2007) writes explicitly about research in education by insiders associated with the emergence and growth of the Doctorate in Education (Ed.D) as distinct from the Doctorate of Philosophy (Ph.D) which raises a similar set of issues as the DBA and my own motivation and interests in TNE and the selection of my own work place as the location for that research. Mercer refers to insider research as a double-edged sword. The insider researcher is thought to have easier access to respondents, which is certainly the case in my research, including that conducted in Sri Lanka, as the costs of the visit was covered by my employer as part of my normal work. Insider researchers will also have a better initial understanding of the social situations, the context and the subtle links between situations (Mercer, 2007). Teusner sees benefits for the insider researcher with regards to pre-understanding of the system under investigation, who to approach, and in possessing ‘street credibility’ from their experience with that system (2016). On the other hand, there are risks of familiarity, such as taking things for granted and assumption-making in their interpretations (Mercer, 2007). The concept of validity for the inside researcher is complicated by the relationship between the researcher and the research.

The issue is whether the insider researcher alters the research process and the literature is not conclusive but rather offers techniques to mitigate against it, principally the reflexivity methods (Teusner, 2016). These concerns are of the same nature of those that consider the

position of the researcher and may be considered an extension of the same issue with the addition considering that I am conducting research in my own workplace.

Healey (2017) adopts an insider researcher approach to a study of the management of an international branch campus, a study that has comparisons in both subject and method to this one. He strengthens the validity of his research by interviewing multiple role holders in a similar way to this research which, for instance, interviews four link tutors at UWE. He argues that insider research can provide a 'valuable way of answering research questions that defy other more conventional quantitative and qualitative research methodologies' (Healey, 2017, p. 10).

I need to be alert to an impact, in terms of my role and perceived power, as an interviewer of junior academic and administrative staff, especially in Sri Lanka. I am not a line manager of any staff in the UK sample and I would class myself as a peer and colleague and yet I cannot discount equally significant issues may exist for any individual I am interviewing, no matter how cordial the relationship in the interview or professionally may be. In Sri Lanka I am clearly identified as a senior representative of the provider institution and someone with power.

The main recourse of the inside researcher is to 'hyper-reflexivity' (Teusner, 2016). Teusner used a set of questions to guide this hyper-reflexivity such as the whether the researcher's relationships with the subject have a negative impact on the subject's behaviour. Teusner uses the term hyper-reflexivity to consider first, the requirement for reflexivity combined with second, a set of behaviours she describes as the researcher's demeanour in being honest, open and modest and being willing to provide explanations and reassurances in order to allay any fears participants may have as both they, and the researcher, know that they will be working together again in their professional roles (Teusner, 2016).

In the conduct of interviews it was therefore my concern that I made the interview, the line of questioning and my verbal and non-verbal responses non-threatening and that the interviews were clearly communicated and understood as being confidential. I am not in a position to know whether that was trusted by the respondents, especially those in Sri Lanka. In my behaviour prior to, and during the research it is only through a reflexive approach, that is aware of the risks of insider research in the workplace, that I can be able to strengthen the validity of the outcomes. A fuller discussion of reflexivity and my approach to the research is contained in the next Chapter, in section 4.9 and 4.10.

3.7.6 Ethical approval

The research proposal, including the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form, was approved by the Ethics Committee of the School of Management of the University of Bath and the Faculty Research Ethics Committee of the researcher's own HEI, the University of the West of England (UWE). Copies of both forms are provided in the appendices.

The protocol followed with each individual participant in the research was, having identified the sample to interview (see Chapter 4), that each potential respondent was emailed

requesting their agreement to participate in the investigation. In the case of the Sri Lanka respondents, a window for a planned visit was given and a request to conduct the interview within that window made. For the UK respondents, the schedule for interviews was not constrained by a time window in the same way. In all cases, the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form was sent to the respondent in advance, at the time of the request for the interview (see section 4.2).

3.8 Feedback to participants

The issue of quality assurance in TNE is a critical one, as it is the mechanism by which the quality and standards of the awards are assured. Feedback will be made available to individual participants in the form of a short confidential report summarising the findings generally and providing details of any particular issues specific to the institution that would allow the institution to use the feedback in developing their own quality assurance processes. Responses to feedback can be seen as a method of enhancing the reliability of the data collected however, at the point of completion, feedback will aimed at giving a voice to participants through the development of recommendations for enhancing quality assurance and developing relationships between the institutions and giving them an opportunity to comment on those recommendations for practice.

3.9 Summary

In this chapter it has been argued that the research question lends itself to an interpretative research approach. The research inquiry is that of a case study in which three institutions are included.

The common factors between the institutions, that make it a case, is that the relationship between the UWE, NS and CSA is that of TNE. The context of Sri Lanka is shared by both host institutions. All three institutions are engaged in quality assurance for TNE. By having two Sri Lankan institutions involved the study can reflect on any issues that are related to the singularity of the individual case, or to country or cultural issues regarding Sri Lanka, or to the process of quality assurance as conducted by UWE with the institutions.

The use of the semi-structured qualitative interview was selected as the main method for the data collection as it is a highly appropriate for inquiry designed to explore and gain insights about the experiences of the participants. Such inquiry through joint, social activity between researcher and participant aims to explore multiple meanings derived from experience and interaction rather than assume that information exists to be collected. The data was collected in two stages, transcribed and analysed.

The next chapter will discuss the data analysis before chapter 5 presents the findings from that analysis.

Chapter 4 Data collection and analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the collection and the analysis of the data gathered from the interviews conducted in two stages, in Sri Lanka and in the UK. The data comprised the recordings made at the time of the interview, verbatim transcripts, and field notes for each interview that covered any observations such as the interview location, any interruptions to the interview, and participant displays of anxiety.

4.2 Data collection

As discussed in the previous chapter, the main research instrument to investigate the research question and collect data was the semi-structured, one-to-one interview.

The data collection was conducted in two stages.

Stage 1: Sri Lanka HEIs: Northshore College of Business and Technology (NS) and City School of Architecture (CSA)): the interviews were conducted in October 2015 during a two week visit to the country as part of my normal duties with respect to the TNE provision.

Stage 2: UWE the interviews were conducted between April 2016 and February 2017. The extended period of data collection at UWE was due to constraints operating outside of the research strategy. The nature of the data collection, and the research question itself, did not require contemporaneous data collection.

Institutional agreement to participate was made following a request to the management of the respective institutions, the Deputy Dean at UWE and the Director/Chief Executive at the SL HEI's. In all cases this was given without hesitation and without requests for further clarification or information.

Following the institutional agreement for participation in the research, care was taken to gain informed consent from all the people approached to participate in the study. I explained in advance the purpose and nature of the research via a 'Participant Information Sheet' and solicited their voluntary involvement in the research with an assurance regarding the protection of the privacy and confidentiality of participants, as recommended by Yin (2014, p. 78) and as required by the ethical approval process of both UWE and the University of Bath. All participants were also sent a consent form in advance as part of the invitation to take part. Both the participant information sheet and the consent form are available in the appendices. All those approached to take part in the study agreed to do so.

Sampling strategy was based on obtaining interviews with appropriate role holders at all the institutions. The sampling was within a relatively small and self-bounding group of individuals involved with the TNE in the UWE and the two Sri Lankan HEIs and was concluded when one or more individuals from each group agreed to be interviewed. 'Purposeful sampling' (Cresswell, 2013, p. 154), refers to conscious decision making in terms of whom to select as participants, the type of sampling strategy and the size of the sample to be studied. The selection of participants was based on those in all three institutions directly

engaged in the TNE, at either a strategic or operational level, and in both academic and administrative roles. The type of sampling chosen refers to selecting individuals because they can inform an understanding of the research question. In this case, the sampling type would fit a combination of ‘maximum variation’, where diverse variations of individuals reflecting the range of roles are selected, and ‘stratified purposeful’, which illustrate sub-groups and facilitates comparisons (Cresswell, 2013, p. 158).

The roles covered in the sample were Senior Manager/Leader, Senior Academic/Link Tutor, Academic, Senior Professional Services, Professional Services (Administrator).

The Senior Manager/Leader role holders operated at the level of strategic decision-making including decisions such as the agreement to enter into the TNE provision. The two Sri Lankan senior managers had both been in post since the development and agreement of the provision. Of the two UWE senior leaders, one had been in position since the start of the provision, and one was relatively new to the role (one year). These individuals can be described as ‘key informants’ (Bryman, 2016, p. 432) and they are important because they can facilitate the research which, in the case of the Sri Lankan key informants, enabled access to staff, and whose support for the research may have given tacit permission to the participants to be open in answering my questions.

Senior Academic role holders corresponded to the UWE Link Tutor and the NS and CSA Programme Leaders. They had specific roles in terms of both the TNE and the quality assurance process.

The Academic role holders were short term or new teaching staff in Sri Lanka (NS only were available to interview). In addition, a UWE academic with a responsibility for TNE development at UWE was also interviewed.

Senior Professional Services role holders were operation managers at UWE and the academic registrar (NS) and deputy chief executives (CSA) with responsibilities including the conduct, and compliance with, the quality assurance process.

Professional Services (operational and administrative) at UWE were role holders with specific responsibilities for ensuring the quality assurance processes at a particular TNE partner were successfully completed. Such a role involves the tracking of progress on assessment readiness and marking and the arrangement of field and award boards. The administrators at NS and CSA were responsible for the uploading of assessment documentation to the UWE owned and managed SharePoint site through which the organisation and dissemination of assessment documentation to moderators and external examiners, and the return of comments to the NS and CSA academic staff was managed.

The following tables show the participant role, code and date of interview. It also contains information on the participants’ higher education experience in terms of undergraduate taught (UGT), postgraduate taught (PGT) and postgraduate research/PhD (PGR). It also states where they undertook their degree as an indication of their experience of higher education either in, or external to, their home HE system. This includes a member of staff at NS whose higher

education experience was one of TNE from UWE in Sri Lanka (NS). In addition, any international academic experience (research associate or lecturer) is also noted.

Role	Interview No.	Date of Interview	HE experience
Pilot (Professional Services)	Pilot01	15-10-15	UGT, UK
Senior Management/Leader (Deputy Dean)	UK04	17/02/2017	UGT/PGT Australia
Senior Manager/Leader (Head of Department)	UK10	06/01/2015	PGR, UK
Senior Professional Services	UK02	09/09/2016	Work experience
Senior Professional Services	UK11	06/01/2015	Work experience
Senior Professional Services	UK12	06/01/2015	Work experience
Senior Academic (Link Tutor)	UK03	22/04/2016	PGR - UK
Senior Academic (Link Tutor)	UK07	17/06/2016	PGR - UK
Senior Academic (Link Tutor)	UK08	15/12/2015	PGT - UK
Senior Academic (Link Tutor)	UK09	16/12/2016	PGR - UK
Academic (international TNE development)	UK06	16/12/2016	PGR - UK
Professional Services (operational and administrative)	UK05	17/06/2016	UGT - UK
Professional Services (operational and administrative)	UK01	09/09/2016	UGT - UK

Table 4.1 UWE interview participants

Role	Interview No.	Date of Interview	HE experience
Senior Manager/Leader (Executive Dean)	SL10	28/10/2015	UGT – SL; PGT – Japan; PGR – SL; HE Academic - Japan, UK;
Senior Administrator (Registrar)	SL06	21/10/2015	UGT – SL; PGT - SL
Senior Academic (Programme Leader)	SL05	19/10/2015	UGT – SL; PGT -SL
Senior Academic	SL09	21/10/2015	UGT – SL; PGT - SL

(Programme Leader)			
Senior Academic (Programme Leader)	SL013	28/10/2015	UGT – SL; PGT - India
Academic (Lecturer)	SL11	28/10/2015	UGT – UK; PGT - UK
Academic (Lecturer)	SL08	26/10/2015	UGT: SL (UK TNE); PGT: SL (UK TNE)
Academic (Lecturer)	SL07	22/10/2015	UGT – SL; PGT – SL; PGR – SL; HE Academic Australia
Administrator	SL12	28/10/2015	UGT -SL

Table 4.2 Sri Lanka NS interview participants

Role	Interview No.	Date of Interview	HE experience
Senior Management/Leader	SL02	19/10/2015	UGT –SL; PGT - UK
Senior Academic (Programme Leader) * Requested to interviewed together with SL04	SL03	19/10/2015	UGT: SL; PGT: SL
Academic(Lecturer) and Senior Administrator * Requested to interviewed together with SL03	SL04	19/10/2015	UGT: SL; PGT: SL

* requested to be interviewed together and agreed

Table 4.3 Sri Lanka CSA interview participants

The sequence of data collection (in terms of which set of interviews to conduct first), was a practical one. Interviews were timed to coincide with a visit to Sri Lanka for work, which could be extended to allow for the data collection. All the interviews were conducted in a setting chosen by the interviewee, in all cases their workplace. The codes applied in the above tables were for the purpose of safeguarding individual anonymity.

In all cases, it was considered essential for the interviews to be conducted sensitively and in a friendly manner. The critical relationship between quality assurance and reputation, as is clear in the case of the University of Wales mentioned in Chapter 1, plus the commercially sensitive nature of TNE in a private institution in Sri Lanka, made it essential that the interviewee's identity be protected throughout the study, its writing up and final thesis and for the respondent to receive these guarantees in advance of the interview and as part of the agreement to be interviewed. Only through making such commitments, and safeguarding them, could respondent participation be open and ethical. None of the respondents asked to see the transcripts after the interviews, and that might be interpreted as a positive outcome to the conduct of the interviews and the guarantees of confidentiality.

The more pragmatic limitations of geography, cost and time were taken into account. Sri Lanka is a long way from my location, however my professional work requires regular visits to Sri Lanka where UWE is engaged in collaborative provision with the two local private sector colleges, NS and CSA, as described above. Professional links from that work were the means by which the identification, and request for participation of the key individuals in the two colleges were made. The interviews in Sri Lanka were arranged to coincide with a work visit and took place in a two-week period.

In the long run '[all] social research is a coming together of the ideal and the feasible' (Bryman, 2016, p. 36). The decision to explore quality assurance in three institutions is based on what a viable number of cases might be in order to explore issues representative of the phenomenon. It is also related to what might be feasible in terms of the resources available and the number of institutions that may be willing to participate.

The question of whether to include documentary evidence was also considered. Documentation has the advantage of being stable and unobtrusive but may be difficult to obtain, introduce bias through incomplete sets and contain the bias of the document's author. In addition, documentation which may be controversial or critical of the institution may be deliberately withheld (Yin, 2014).

The types of documents that might be of interest in this case and might be analysed to trace the interactions of quality assurance practice, would be more likely be interpersonal communications between the people involved in the TNE, principally a large volume of emails. The feasibility of gaining access to such documents was considered and it was felt that access to such communications could not be achieved, principally on the grounds elucidated above by Yin (2014). Any attempt to obtain access to emails could also breach protocols of privacy if the e-mail system is private or provided by a third party.

4.3 The interview questions

4.3.1 The pilot interview.

A pilot interview was arranged with a UWE professional services TNE administrator. The pilot questions were, with hindsight, very specific, reflected a mechanistic approach to the conduct of quality assurance and asked about the participant's knowledge of quality, standards, the role of the QAA and the quality frameworks in place at the UWE, as well as their own practice.

The responses, extracts from the transcript can be seen below, displayed a level of nervousness and anxiety.

Interviewer: 'what you do you think is meant by 'standards' and how do you ... is there a distinction between quality and standards?'

Interviewee: 'Erm [pauses] I suppose standards you would say would be, erm, I don't know, achieving a certain level of, perhaps erm, ticking boxes to say we have, erm, sorry I don't mean that in a negative way but just to say that, erm, yeah, ticking boxes to say we have

achieved these, erm [pauses] it would be [laughs], erm [pauses] ... I've lost my train of thought now – sorry.'

Interviewer: 'our quality and standards are overseen by the QAA - the Quality Assurance Agency - and they give us guidance about what we need to do in terms of our quality and standards and how we assure them so how well do you know the quality code? Is it part of your role to know the quality code?'

Interviewee: 'Not really, no, I mean I have heard of, erm you know, the body - if you see what I mean and so I have a general idea of what they [QAA] do, but as to specifics about what the sort of standards we have to be reached – and then I-I don't really know.'

Pilot Interview, UWE respondent, conducted 15/10/2015

Upon reflection, it was clear to me that the interviewee was displaying nervousness and potential stress from an interview dynamic which came across as a test of knowledge, with right or wrong answers, moreover, to questions from a more senior member of staff that led to the closing up of the participant's responses. This was the opposite of what I was seeking to achieve. I realised that such an approach would equally unsettle the participants in the UK and Sri Lanka, if they felt they were being tested in some way, by someone the Sri Lankan participants knew as a high-status representative of the awarding body and that the interviews if conducted in such a way, would not elicit fuller and more open responses.

Following the pilot interview, the interview questions for stage 1 were changed to more open style of question focusing on their experiences and any questions that might seem interrogative, about checking or testing the respondents' knowledge about the technicalities of quality assurance were removed.

4.3.2 Stage 1 interviews – Sri Lanka

The interview questions for the stage 1 interviews were amended from the pilot to cover the open questions about quality and quality assurance and did not ask specific, knowledge based, questions such as 'what do the QAA do?', what is the role of the 'Quality Management and Enhancement framework at UWE?'. Such question styles could be interpreted as a test and, in the interview could lead to a closing up in fear of saying the 'wrong thing' from the perspective of the respondent.

The stage 1 Sri Lankan Senior Manager/Leader participants were asked to participate by the email from the UK as part of the process of obtaining permission to conduct the research at the institutions. Once in Sri Lanka, the remaining interviews were arranged subject to the availability of myself and respondents and a schedule drawn up and agreed with the participants is which one hour per interview was set aside. The interviews were conducted at each college.

4.3.3 Stage 2 interviews - UK

An initial analysis of the stage 1 outcomes found that most of the participants, in their own words, wanted to see more in the way of visits and staff exchange and expressed the

perceived benefits to working relations and the quality assurance process. As a result, the data collection for stage 2 was amended to be more specific in asking about the perceived benefits of visits and staff exchange from the perspective of the participants of UWE.

The stage 1 and stage 2 interview questions are in the appendices. These were used to structure the interview and to create a conversational mood. For instance, if I thought something had already been covered in a response to a previous question I would not ask that question.

All interviews were recorded on voice recorder software (Voice Record Pro) using both an iPad and an iPhone for back-up.

All participant data, in the form of both audio files and transcripts, was stored on UWE's secure server. Completed audio files were uploaded to Microsoft One Drive from which they were downloaded to the university's secure server and deleted from Microsoft OneDrive. From the local secure server, the audio files were uploaded to a university approved transcription service where they were transcribed verbatim. Once complete, transcripts were downloaded from the transcription service and deleted from it, I anonymised all the transcripts using a code stored in a separate file on the secure server. The transcripts were anonymised during the initial reading before beginning the data analysis. Each audio file was listened to again with the transcript and edited wherever possible to replace inaudible sections with a close to verbatim text. Some parts of the interviews remain inaudible. An example of a transcript edited for audibility is provided in the appendices.

Further field notes to elaborate on the setting, pace and interactions of the interview and any other observations were made for each interview. Amongst observations noted were nervousness, eye contact, expressing in advance their inexperience and or apologising that they were not knowledgeable.

With regard to the interviews with the senior managers, such respondents can be considered 'elites' and require a specialised approach to interviewing. Marshall and Rossman (2011) establish a taxonomy of types of elite. In terms of those types, the elite category which this research interviewed is the 'organisational elite'. Marshall and Rossman establish many advantages in interviewing elites in terms of their knowledge of structure, history, relationships, policies, plans, and broader perspectives. They also raise a wide range of challenges. The first issue is one of access to people with busy schedules and who may be hard to contact. A second challenge is that the interviewees may be very experienced at giving interviews to the press and media and therefore sophisticated in managing the interview process, indeed in taking control of it. This concern could be potentially exacerbated by the status differential between myself and the senior management interviewees. Such concerns can be addressed by the interviewer taking steps to establish their competence and credibility by displaying knowledge of the subject and by 'projecting an accurate conceptualisation of the problem through thoughtful questioning' (Marshall and Rossman, 2011, p. 156). In addition, asking open questions that allow the respondent the freedom to use their knowledge and imagination can also draw valuable information from the

interview. For the above reasons the institutional interviews were not organised or planned until the literature research established a comprehensive account of the current position of TNE internationally and the operational issues it encounters, information that the participants may themselves like to receive and which was intended, alongside their knowledge of my role, to establish my competence.

4.3.4 Approaching the transcripts

The production and use of transcripts from interviews is a research activity that involves the close, repeated listening of recordings in order to develop transcripts for analysis (Silverman, 2013). It is a 'multi-step sense-making endeavour' (DeCuir-Gunby, et al., 2011, p. 137). Bazeley proposes a strategy for the analysis of interview transcripts, namely to read, reflect, play, explore. The first stage is to read and read again to get a sense of the whole data set. Writing as you read allows the collection of analytic thoughts, observations and relationships between participants if they are referred to (Bazeley, 2013).

The transcription of all interviews was conducted by Bristol Transcription Services (BTS) for a fee. For the Sri Lanka Stage 1 interviews, the audio file for each interview was uploaded to the BTS site as soon as I returned from Sri Lanka and I requested a verbatim transcript. The transcriptions were returned within a week of uploading and I read through them annotating them with points of interest and points where the participant was inaudible. I then read through them with the audio recording to check the accuracy of the transcription.

With the ability to pause and rewind, I also sought to clarify all inaudible sections of the recording which were marked on the transcript with minute, second and duration of the inaudible section. For the Sri Lankan interviews the frequency and duration of these inaudible sections depended on the individual participant. They were present across all interviews, they were infrequent and they were generally caused by the accented English of the participant, or by the microphone of the recording not being able to pick up fully if the participant turned away, and sometimes because the participant was referring to individuals by name or to organisational acronyms or Sri Lankan organisations or contextual details that the transcriber was unfamiliar with. Repeated listening by myself enabled approximately half of the inaudible sections to be completed with a verbatim account. The remainder remain in the transcripts marked as 'inaudible'.

The UK interviews were undertaken during a longer period of time. The same process of uploading and checking for accuracy was conducted and it was found that few transcripts contained any inaudible sections and that these were infrequent. Almost all of the inaudible content was able to be transcribed following repeated listening.

It is these transcripts, subject to repeated listening and checking, that were subject to the analysis.

4.4 Qualitative data analysis

Qualitative data analysis is the process by which inferences and themes are identified and developed from qualitative data, in this research, the interviews conducted. The data itself is, as has been discussed in chapter 3, a potential source of rich descriptions, insights and explanations of processes and relationships in the context of TNE provision between the UK and Sri Lankan institutions.

The method selected for qualitative analysis should enable the researcher to analyse and interpret the way that the participants experience, act on and think about themselves in the context under investigation.

The analysis of data presents a challenge for qualitative researcher. This challenge includes how to represent the data, and more importantly, the process of data analysis involves organising the data, conducting a read through of the data, coding and organising the data, representing the data, and forming an interpretation of them (Cresswell, 2013).

Alvesson (2010) argues that ‘qualified interpretation work’, in which critical questioning and reflection are basic ingredients, is necessary for the use of interview studies being something else and more than ambitious journalism. Interview research should go beyond data management and sorting, and the ‘principle direction becomes quite different from the sorting, codification and categorization paradigm dominating the mainstream in interview based research’ (p.60). This means that the researcher should take interview statements very seriously and treat them as ‘data’, providing the cornerstone of empirical inquiry, while subjecting them to critical analysis: one must have very good reasons to believe that interview statements indicate reality (objective or subjective) before paying any particular attention to them as valuable indicators of anything other than interview talk and the logics or forces producing this. That they may appear trustworthy or seem to point to some examples illustrating general claims or ideas does not necessarily say that much (Alvesson, 2010).

The first stage of the process of analysis, within an interpretivist approach, uses thematic analysis of the data to explore the ways individuals understand their engagement in quality assurance in TNE. The development of codes, the formation of themes, and the organisation of themes into larger units of abstraction is the first stage of interpretation, or making sense of the data (Cresswell, 2013).

4.5 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. Braun and Clarke argue that thematic analysis should be seen as a foundational method for qualitative research and one that should be seen as a method in own right (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

In their paper on the theory, application and evaluation of thematic analysis they acknowledge that, while thematic analysis is widely used, there is ‘no clear agreement about what thematic analysis is and how you go about doing it’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 6).

One of the main reasons for that lack of clear agreement is with regard to the role of the researcher. On the one hand there is an approach that considers themes as ‘emerging’ from the data or residing in the data waiting to be ‘discovered’. On the other hand, Braun and Clarke argue that themes do not ‘emerge’ from the data. Such an approach is argued to present a passive account of the process of analysis which ‘gives voice’ to the participants. Rather than the researcher giving voice to their participants the researcher plays an active role in identifying the patterns and themes and selecting those of interest. The patterns and themes come from thinking about that data and creating links, the themes essentially ‘reside’ in the heads of the researcher (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis was conducted across a data set (all the interviews) rather than within a data item (a single interview) and was conducted through a process of coding.

4.6 Coding

Coding is an iterative process in which a tentative set of categories that match text segments are developed, and then subjected to the review and re-review of the data, until they are combined into five or six themes used to report on the data (Cresswell, 2013). Coding transcripts involves identifying small categories of information, based on the expressed words of a participants, which is ascribed to a category or code. A process of iteration aggregates the data/codes into thematic map or a coding tree of main and sub-categories (Cresswell, 2013).

4.7 Themes

A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the data set and represents a pattern of some sort in the data set. There is no fixed proportion of the data items that must instance the theme for it to become a theme. Nor does it require substantial content rather than a sentence to become a theme (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Themes themselves consist of aggregated codes in order to form a common and key idea that forms a central part of the interpretation, or making sense, of the data in relation to the research question (Cresswell, 2013).

Braun and Clarke distinguish between inductive thematic analysis in which the process is conducted without trying to fit it into the researcher's preconceptions, while recognising that researchers will always carry their theoretical and epistemological positions. This approach is described as data-driven or 'bottom-up'. A deductive or 'top-down' approach is driven by the analyst and their theoretical interests in the subject (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

For this research, the subject of the investigation is quality assurance in TNE and the interviews were structured to explore that subject. My approach to the coding was to code at a detailed level with a description and name for the code reflecting what the participant was speaking about at the time. This led to the coding of large proportions of each transcript with many named initial codes. This has elements of an inductive approach as I did not have a pre-designed code book and I followed the data in creating codes. Following re-reading and reflection, the detailed codes were combined into a first and second level of themes.

4.8 The process of data analysis

The Sri Lanka transcripts were coded following a staged approach developed by Braun and Clarke (2006), as follows:

Stage 1 Familiarisation with the data. This was achieved as described above, through iterative reading of the transcripts, while also listening to the audio files to check for accuracy. Paper copies of the transcripts were then hand-annotated, which generated some initial ideas for codes which the research used to develop a series of mind maps. This stage was very time consuming however, immersion in the data, as Braun and Clarke describe it, is extremely important to become familiar with the breadth and depth of the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Silverman notes that any research claims need to be identified in precise analysis of detailed transcripts and cautions against premature theory construction and a

priori speculation (Silverman, 2013), however annotations and note-taking were valuable in thinking about the data.

After the familiarisation with the Sri Lankan data, I constructed a first mind map, naming categories of data and their relationships, based on the content of the data.

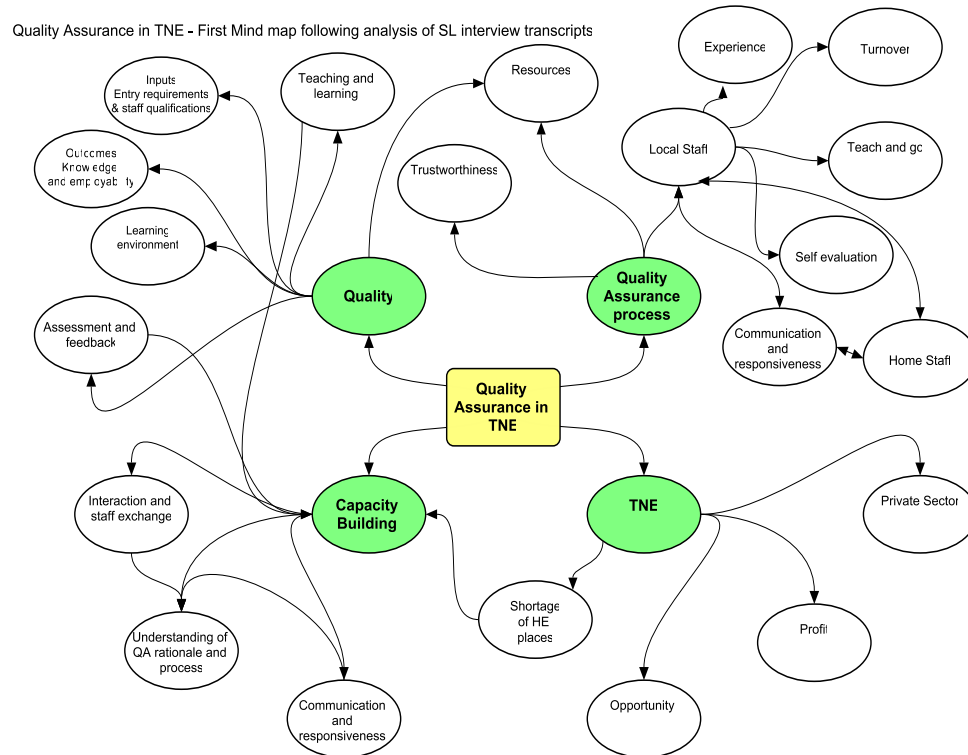


Figure 4.1 First mind map after first analysis of Sri Lanka data

Stage 2 Generating initial codes. This process requires working systematically through the data set and identifies the basic content of the data that is of interest to the analyst and organises it into meaningful groupings.

Stage 3 Searching for themes. Having conducted the initial coding, and with a long list of identified codes, this stage involves sorting the codes and combining the codes into potential themes. This process was conducted manually with the annotated printed copies of the transcripts.

Figure 4.2 (below) shows the thematic framework following the first data analysis process of coding and the identification of themes. The blue boxes on the left were the subject of the investigation and drove the questioning of the semi-structured interviews. The themes and subthemes developed from the analysis are in the green boxes.

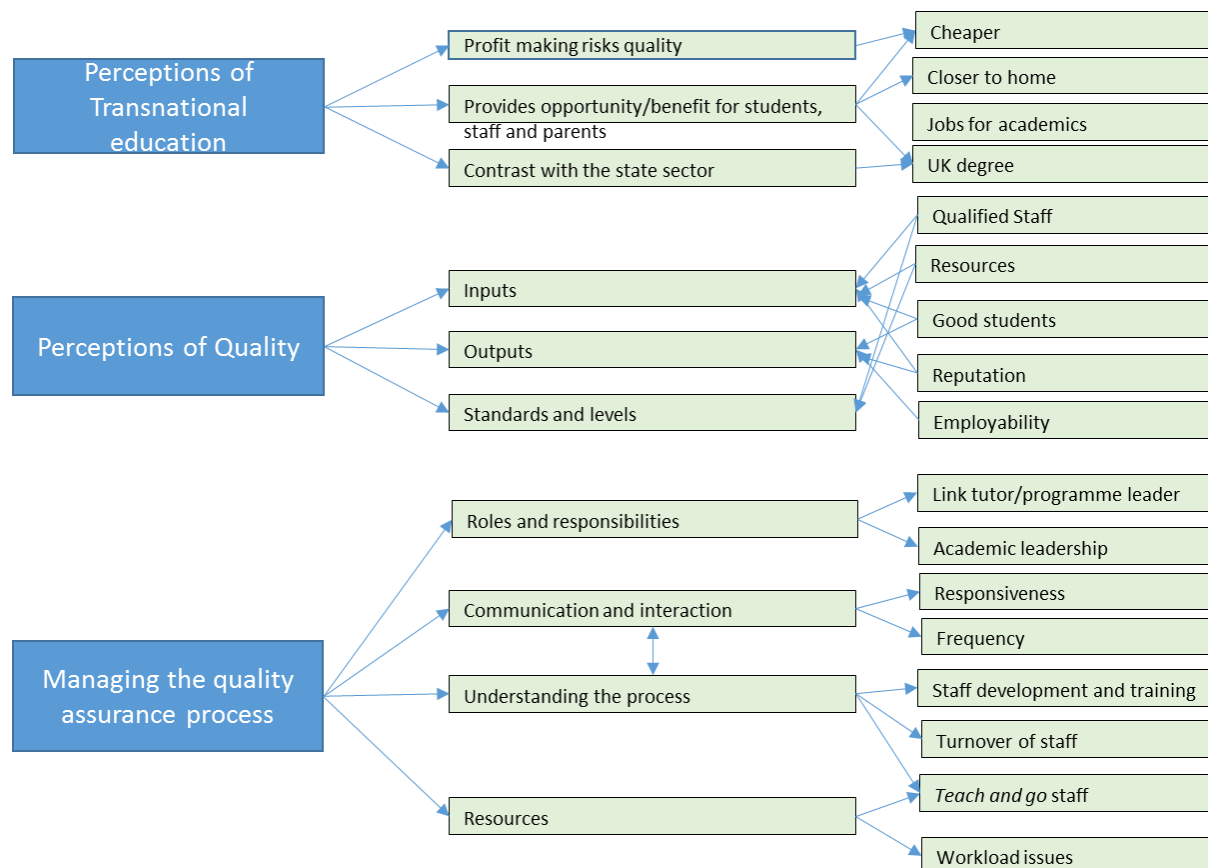


Figure 4.2 First thematic framework of Sri Lanka data

Stages 4 and 5 Defining, naming and reviewing themes.

Using software to assist in the process of qualitative data analysis is increasingly common and there are a range of software tools available, the best-known being NVivo. Software specifically designed for qualitative data analysis provides many benefits, initially simply of flexibility and efficiency such as dragging and dropping to code highlighted text (Bazeley, 2013). Following the manual analysis of the data I realised that a software tool could assist the process of coding, the exploration of, and reflection on links, and provide an easier means of creating, changing and presenting the thematic framework. I chose to experiment with NVivo, because of its free availability to members of staff of my university, together with training.

I was new to NVivo software and unable, in the timeframe, to find a place on a training course as they were fully booked. I learnt the basic functionality of the software through online tutorials. This was problematic, in that many of the online tutorials, including those of the supplier, were for earlier versions of the software than NVivo 11 which I was using.

All the transcripts were uploaded as individual sources to NVivo. The transcripts were then each analysed again using NVivo. NVivo allowed the highlighting and coding of text and at this stage I created many new codes and cross referenced them using the software. The software made it relatively simple to think about and to group, cross reference and regroup the codes.

The UK data was coded following the same staged approach. I considered setting the coding of the UK data as a separate project in NVivo and started coding the UK transcripts in that way. I soon realised that the codes were very similar, they simply covered the same issues but from the perspective of the UK participant. Indeed, the cross-cultural perspectives are one of the means by which insights and cultural meanings are generated and explored (Bazeley, 2013), and so the themes were developed from the whole data set.

A single thematic framework was created following the UK data analysis during which there was some re-categorisation of codes and sub-categories however the themes remained consistent. The coding of the UK transcripts continued to generate new codings and allowed data to be coded against multiple categories. A new code that emerged quite late in the coding process was ‘power relationships’ because it was very clearly articulated and illustrated with an example by a single participant. Reflection and review led to the many data items I had coded to ‘working relationships’ being cross referenced to ‘power relationships’ because, although they were not explicitly using the word ‘power’, I interpreted their words to also be implicit discussions about power in relationships as they referred to ‘having to do things’ and ‘being told’.

Following this stage, the three areas of interest under investigation (perceptions of TNE, perceptions of quality and standards and the quality assurance process in TNE) and which prompted the interview questions, were collected into five three, and seven themes, each with sub-themes, which will be discussed in the findings. Figure 4.3 shows the final thematic framework.

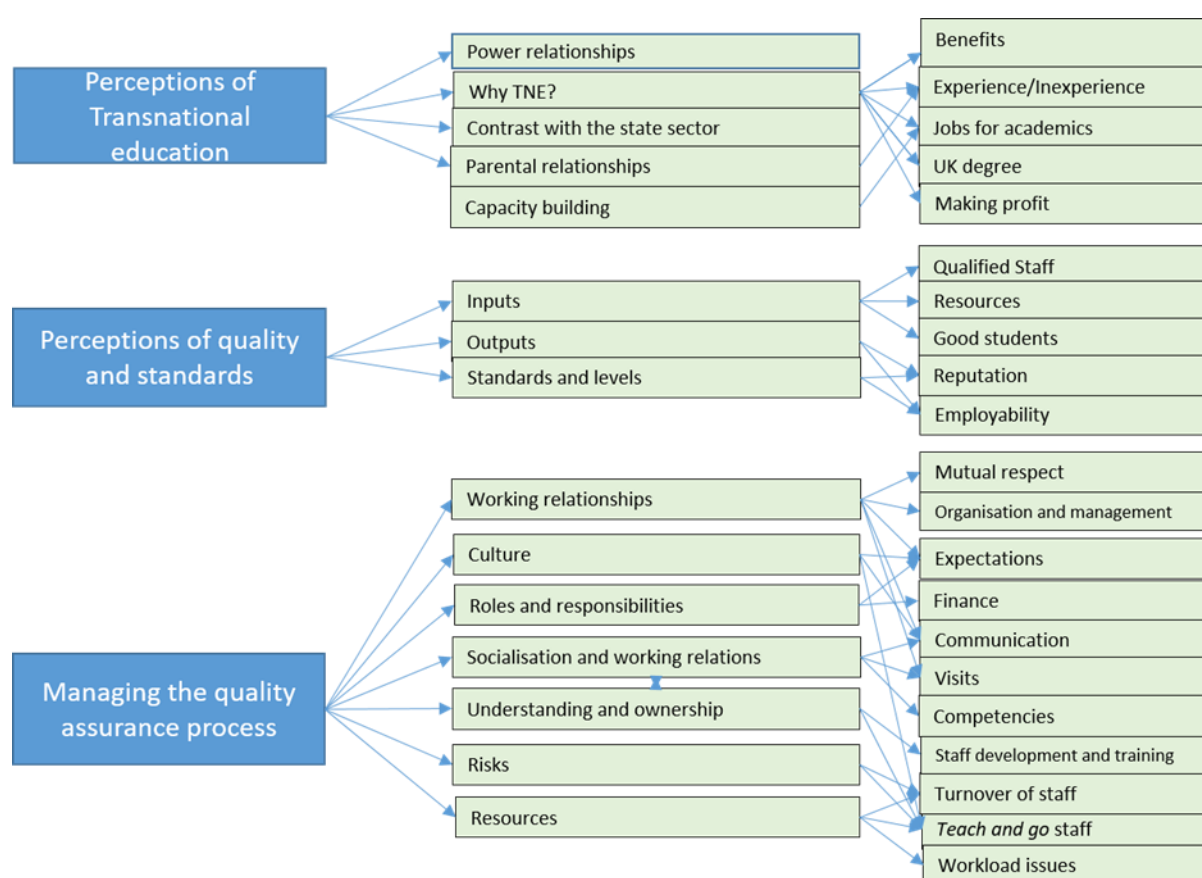


Figure 4.3 Final thematic framework

Themes however are ‘just a step on the way’ (Bazeley, 2013, p. 191). Using the themes to theorise concepts in quality assurance in TNE will be discussed in the next chapter.

4.9 Quality in qualitative research

All research must be open to criticism and evaluation (Bengtsson, 2016). In interpretive qualitative work, where the aim is to generate accounts of experience rather than ‘discover facts’, the rigour of the research is evaluated differently than under the assumptions of a positivist scientific enquiry, however it must nevertheless be subject to evaluation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Lincoln and Guba discuss the trustworthiness of qualitative research, which they call naturalistic evaluation, and offer techniques to increase the likelihood that the criteria of assessing the quality of social research have been addressed in ways that parallel the scientific paradigm (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). They liken the concept of trustworthiness in quality research as parallel to that of rigour in scientific research.

There are number of criteria used in qualitative research, the most prominent and important being validity (Bryman, 2016).

Validity refers to the credibility of the researcher’s interpretations of the data and whether any inferences made are supported by the data and sensible in relation to earlier research (Silverman, 2013). The credibility of the research requires consideration of any contrary, deviant or negative case (Cresswell, 2013) and consideration of alternative interpretations (Silverman, 2013). Silverman also refers to the ‘problem of anecdotalism’ in which the reader must be persuaded that any findings are based on critical investigation of ‘all the data and not a few well chosen ‘examples’ (Silverman, 2013, p. 286).

One way to address this is through comprehensive data treatment, in which all cases of the data are treated in the analysis. The sampling strategy has been explained and, in the context of the research approach, ‘to explore’, there are no deviant, negative or contrary cases as such. Participants spoke about their perceptions of TNE and the quality assurance process they experienced. All the data collected has been subject to the same analysis and no participant withdrew their consent from the research before, during or after the interviews took place.

Validity, in qualitative research, is about the credibility of our interpretations (Silverman, 2014). At this point in the analysis, to what extent can the researcher’s coding and theme development be supported by the data? One of the techniques Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed is that of triangulation or cross-checking of data by use of different sources, methods and different investigators. Interpretive research does not assume a single truth about which facts are gathered and will elicit different accounts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). While the case under investigation is specific and the methods selected are argued to be appropriate, I was able to achieve a limited degree of cross checking in the coding stage.

In order to strengthen the trustworthiness of the results a second coder was given the coding framework and three transcripts to code and differences in coding application were resolved via discussion. The second coder was a PhD researcher who has undertaken thematic analysis training and has experience in data collection and coding in the academic and public health field.

In discussion with the second coder, she identified a theme under Perceptions of Transnational Education which she named as 'Parental Relationships' on the basis of codes for 'parent university', 'mother university', 'monitoring', 'expectations', 'affiliation', and 'external standards'. She also identified a further two themes under managing the Quality Assurance Process which she named as 'Actions' based on codes for 'checking' and 'communicating', and 'Risks' based on codes for 'remoteness' and 'investment and returns'.

The coding framework and a different transcript were also given to a third coder, an experienced academic professionally engaged in TNE development, but with limited knowledge of the Sri Lankan institutions. A further discussion on the coding was undertaken and minor revisions to the coding framework made.

It was not possible in this research to conduct member checking of transcripts, especially as English may not have been the first language of some participants, in order to confirm that my interpretation represents the intended meaning of the participant. Similarly, it was not possible to conduct member checking of the coding and thematic framework. This is a limitation of the analysis.

Other criteria for the evaluation of quality in qualitative research include dependability, reliability and replication.

The dependability of qualitative research relates to how well the research question aligns to the research approach and the analysis process (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Consideration of this was given in the research design in which the research question is concerned with exploring cross cultural understandings of quality assurance in TNE. An interpretative approach has been articulated and thematic analysis presented as an appropriate method to approach the data seeking insight. The analysis was undertaken by a single analyst thus avoiding the risk to dependability from multiple researchers.

Reliability is concerned with whether the results of the study are repeatable and is a difficult criterion to meet as it is impossible to freeze a social setting such as that within the phenomena under study (Bryman, 2013).

Replication is concerned with the ability of the study to be replicated. The research design and data collection and analysis has been explained in full thus allowing it to be replicated. Indeed, the fact that this study concerns a case in one host country, Sri Lanka, invites replication in other regions, countries and institutions if the research findings prompt it.

The concept of generalisation is an interesting one in social research. In the positivist tradition, generalisation refers to the idea that precise sampling procedures make it possible to make statements about a larger population based on what was learned from the sample (Bazeley, 2013). Qualitative research aspires to analytical generalisations with the goal of developing concepts and theories with application beyond the immediate context. The term transferability was introduced by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as an alternative to generalisation. They argue that the case-to-case transfer of knowledge is legitimate and seek 'thick, descriptive data, so that judgements about the degree of fit or similarity may be made by others who may wish to apply all or part of the findings elsewhere' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.19).

The case for transferability lies with the level of detail collected and recorded and whether they reflect the full complexity of the case so as to learn from it (Bazeley, 2013). A discussion of the transferability of the findings is contained in the next chapter.

4.10 Reflexivity and interpretation in qualitative research

Qualitative researchers need to position themselves in their writing. This is the concept of reflexivity in which the researcher is conscious of the biases, values and experiences that they bring to a qualitative research study (Cresswell, 2013). Cresswell sees reflexivity as having two parts, one being an account of the researcher own experience with the phenomena being explored. I have referenced my position in Chapters 1 and 3. The second element of reflexivity for Cresswell, and, one he argues is often overlooked, is to write about how these experiences shape the interpretation of the phenomenon and the analysis of the data, the findings and the conclusion.

Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) choose the term reflexive interpretation as emphasising a broader multi-level area of reflection. Interpretation implies that there are no self-evident, simple or unambiguous rules or procedure in reflection and that crucial ingredients are the researcher's judgement, intuition, ability to 'see and point something out' as well as consideration of a more or less explicit dialogue' (p.248). They suggest this can be applied at four levels as shown in Table 3.1 below.

Aspect/ Level	Focus
Interaction with empirical material	Accounts in interviews, observations of situations, and other empirical materials
Interpretation	Underlying meanings
Critical interpretation	Ideology, power, social reproduction
Reflection on text production and language use	Own text, claims to authority, electivity of the voices represented in the text.

Table 4.4 Levels of interpretation, Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000, p. 250)

As reflexivity is a major strategy for quality control in qualitative research, understanding how it may be impacted by the characteristics and experiences of the researcher, is of paramount importance (Berger, 2015).

Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) reflect on Foucault's understanding of power as having great value to all reflective social science. They argue that, according to Foucault, power is everywhere and it exists only in relationships and at a micro-level and is fused with knowledge. There can be no 'innocent' or 'pure' knowledge' nor neutral research. Due to my own position I must be aware of the relationship I am in with regard to the research participants in Sri Lanka. I may need to be aware that, as Alvesson (2010) cautions, the "interviewee may be problematic because s/he may actually be 'knowing' but may be incapable of 'telling'", or that they may be, for many reasons, including political ones, be capable but unwilling to tell (p. 29).

According to Alvesson (2010) reflexive practices can be about challenging a discourse, an interpretation, a concept or a representation in order to produce an alternative, better or

supplementary knowledge contribution. He calls the latter ‘positive’ R-reflexivity: R referring ‘to reconstruction, re-presentation and rethinking’ (p. 108).

4.11 Summary and reflection on the data collection and analysis

The case study and the organisations involved have been described and my relations with the organisations and the ethical implications discussed. Interpretive analysis acknowledges the part of the researcher in the generation of data and resulting accounts of interpretation. A discussion of the researcher’s position in the data collection and analysis process reinforces the credibility of the findings (Creswell, 2013). The research design and methods were clearly described in chapter 3.

In this chapter the detailed analysis process for the whole data set has been explained.

The process of developing the themes has been transparent, as discussed in this chapter, together with techniques to support the validity of the research. The 24 anonymised transcripts are available for scrutiny and one transcript is provided, as an example, in the appendices.

A staged approach of reading, re-reading, reflection, playing, exploring and development of themes in an iterative way has been followed (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

The data analysis stage was a challenging and time-consuming experience. The amount of data represented in 24 interviews, comprising 20 hours of audio and 118 pages of transcripts has been significant and much more so than originally anticipated. Checking for accuracy and inaudibility was part of this, but it also allowed a first run through the data. The main phase of the analysis took place after all the data had been collected. This meant refamiliarising myself with the Sri Lanka data and immersing myself in the full data set. This was a significant challenge in terms of the time frame for the thesis submission but it was a task I undertook with enthusiasm and commitment as I became excited by the data and the themes under development.

The additional challenge I gave myself was to learn the basics of NVivo as a tool for organising and managing the source documents and the coding process. This has been more challenging as I realised the complexity and unfamiliarity of the software would constrain my use to the basic functions.

In this reflexive account of the research design, data collection and data analysis process I have sought to establish the validity of the research. I have been aware of the cross-cultural context in which the research has been conducted and the ethical implications of that. In the next chapter, the findings of the data analysis will be presented and discussed.

Chapter 5 Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the research explored in the process of data analysis. It identifies key areas of influence on the outcome of the quality assurance process in TNE in the case study.

This presentation of the findings is in the form of an integrated narrative which attempts to bring together data from the 24 respondents. The chapter is not reportage of what was said by the participants, nor is it structured using the thematic framework as developed. The findings are based on the themes and sub themes but also attempt to synthesise and interpret across the data (O'Brien, et al, 2014).

In Chapter 6 the findings will be discussed in the light of the concepts and frameworks identified in the literature review which led to the proposed conceptual framework.

In this chapter I will employ foreshadowing, described by Cresswell (2013) as using 'narrative hints of things to come...or themes to be developed later' (p. 225).

5.2 Presentation of the findings

Evidence from the data analysis is provided as embedded text excerpts to substantiate analytic findings. Embedded quotes are used to provide specific evidence, in the participant's own words, to support a theme (Cresswell, 2013). A full set of data in the form of extracts from the transcripts with sub-categorisation related to the main themes of the analysis is provided in Appendix F.

The data analysis extracted illustrative excerpts for the three organisational subjects of the investigation, fifteen level 1 themes and twenty-one level 2 themes. The data analysis identified 648 codes captured as text excerpts across the thematic themes. Data was indeed rich and complicated to handle and the case does have some of the characteristics of a revelatory case study in terms of some of the findings (Yin, 2014).

Any attempt to present this data as text excerpts is problematic in the context of a research report and its space limitations and would run the risk of overloading the reader with data, and run the risk of being a form of ambitious journalism (Alvesson, 2010) and bogging the analysis down in low-level details (Cohen, et al., 2018). The use of the text excerpts in the findings is limited to the selection of sample illustrative ones only. I recognise this opens the finding to the critique that I am biased in my selection and could be ignoring negative cases. The reflexive account of the research design, data collection and data collection that precedes this account of the findings is offered, together with the availability of the fuller data set in Appendix F, in defence of the validity of this account.

In the following sections, I present my account of the findings with a commentary. In Chapter 6, I further interpret the data using 'hunches, insights and intuition' (Cresswell, 2013, p.187) and 'R-reflexivity': reconstruction, re-presentation and rethinking (Alvesson 2010, p. 108).

5.3 Transnational education and the higher education context in Sri Lanka

The prominence of this issue was the biggest surprise from the data analysis, although it was exclusively an issue that arose from the Sri Lankan respondents. The arrival of TNE provision in Sri Lanka is having an impact on the national higher education system.

The role of TNE in meeting demand for higher education is seen as a positive contribution with affordability a major benefit. In addition it is seen as an economic benefit to the country:

if you think in that way, only a few students can go and have that opportunity, to get a degree from their mother country, So people who are having money, so rich people, can go abroad, but still the student has the potential but no money, so this is a good opportunity given by UWE for them I think. SL07 Academic, NS

So actually, in Sri Lankan society the middle-class people, a lot of middle-class people, are going to state university; highest, top-rank people going abroad, but the remaining upper middle-class people, this is a good opportunity for them. They have the potential but not enough money. They have money but not that much to go aboard. In that case, this [TNE] is very good. SL08 Academic, NS

the parent who can afford, they send their student abroad, actually that cost us huge money for the country but when we have this model [TNE] they can keep their student in the country SL05 Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

It is clear from the interviews that the state/private sector distinction and the Sri Lankan participants' role as employees of the private sector is an issue for them and one of concern.

A first issue, is one of perceived differences in quality and reputation of the state/private universities. It is the private sector nature of the colleges using TNE to offer HE that appears to be the issue, rather than the UK universities:

there is this benchmark available for the State Universities that more top students are selected for the State Universities. So, the lower students are now going to the private universities, that's the main concern [about the private sector], other than that it's not the problem with the UK [TNE providers], that's what I hear. So they think those who cannot perform well in their A-levels can't perform well in other circumstances. SL05 Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

it is the general tendency that people tend to respect and look up to the state sector more. I think maybe since that is the perception of the people, so sometimes even some schools teach us they think that okay if they go to a private sector university it's like, you know, a lower standard or something. SL06 Senior Administrator, NS

the perception is that private universities are inferior in quality compared to state universities – there's a very clear differentiation in Sri Lankan higher education market. SL08 Academic, NS

A second issue, is that the private sector is seen as open to academic fraud although this is presented as the perception of the state sector rather than the participants experience of TNE:

if the student has to get three high A's to enter the state sector university which is free, and if they can enter the private sector university with 3 passes they are minimum, they think they are selling the degree, (laughs) so they-they don't like it, SL06 Senior Administrator, NS

There were many similar comments made and a further discussion on this issue is provided in Chapter 6. The private TNE sector is subject to criticism in the country, within a narrative that profit-making higher education is open to corruption, albeit a narrative led by the state sector and its alumni. Almost all the TNE participants were educated in the state sector and so they find themselves in the middle of this national discourse.

5.4 The institutional context

From the point of view of the TNE institutions engaged in it, TNE is seen as part of positive process of internationalisation:

the collaborations have made it possible for the Sri Lankan universities and students to bring themselves up to international standard, where they are not confined to working or practicing only in this country, but they are able to go out and practice anywhere in the world SL02 Senior Management/Leader, CSA

At UWE the commercial imperative for TNE is recognised. For the UK participants, the financial viability does matter, but other reasons are articulated which relate primarily to benefits to the UK institution.

it used to be that it was successful if it was making money and I think now I see this very much more as generating surplus that will allow us to do something else but then obviously, we're looking at much wider student and staff engagement activities that enhance the student experience and the staff experience and internationalise what we do. That's I think what I'm looking for. UK 06 Academic/TNE Development

The commercial imperative for UWE is also understood at the Sri Lankan institutions:

Sri Lanka is a new partner to UWE isn't it? So maybe they found it profitable in Sri Lanka? SL13 Senior Academic, NS

However, one Sri Lankan participant did acknowledge there might be other reasons:

if I were in UWE and I was doing it then I might have basically two intentions; one thing is I can expand the market, it's one thing, profitability. And the other thing is, now education, even though we make a profit out of it, it helps the society basically. We can build up the society, so globally we can give something to the other nations if we can. SL05 Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

The Sri Lankan respondent is however ascribing views to UWE which are not evidenced.

I did not specifically ask for the rationale of NS and CSA for engaging in TNE. Some of the rationale is implicit in answers to other questions and given below. A senior manager at UWE did however comment on the reasoning of the TNE hosts for engaging in TNE:

UWE has a reputation around quality assurance. In very crude terms that's what the partner in Sri Lanka or in Oman or Hong Kong are buying. If I compare the Hong Kong partner then they've been doing that for a long time now. They've built up their knowhow. You've got to think at some point from their own market perspective they'll no longer need the UWE UK brand UK04 Senior Management/Leader

Part of what, in effect, the partnership needs to do, and part of the reason why I suspect that they are interested in engaging with the UK institution, is that they can start to develop that know-how themselves. UK04 Senior Management/Leader

The Sri Lankan partners are certainly learning from UWE, as well as accessing for free the intellectual capital in the teaching material that is made available to them as part of the franchise arrangement.

There were clear differences between the host organisations in terms of their confidence in their ability to meet quality assurance process. For CSA there had been a proactive effort in the appointment and development of staff with the appropriate competence.

my success story are the two deputies and I'm very proud of what they have achieved because earlier when I came here for the first year or so or year and a half I was not able to take even a days' leave because you have to be there like when you came was otherwise things don't move – nothing! SL02 Senior Management/Leader, CSA

And of course, UWE coming here made me strengthen the processes we put in place because they have a very clear cut administrative process, very mechanical, but, it is much more precise with dates and you know that has to be amalgamated with our year planning, and all that you know, co-ordinated. SL02 Senior Management/Leader, CSA

In comparison, at NS, resources seem to have been an issue from the start.

we put effort into NS but it doesn't seem to stick in terms of procedure or understanding or capacity. UK12 Senior Professional Services

I think we fell behind for certain deadlines and it is nothing to do with miscommunication or less communication. I believe there is something to do with the workload balance, for us we have been struggling and we have been learning everything and in terms of documentation, teaching, assessment, marking, line marking, second marking, some of the things are basically new for me also SL10 Senior Management/Leader, NS

This would seem to be something related to the relative experience of the two institutions. NS was a 'start-up' enterprise when UWE first established its relationship with them and without any prior academic or administrative infrastructure. CSA had already been running for a number of years and had achieved accreditation by RIBA for their diplomas and so possessed such an infrastructure and were able to take on the requirements of UWE more easily.

We're dealing with partners of different levels of maturity. UK04 Senior Management/Leader

[NS] I think still are very much in a knowhow growth model. You could map that out, couldn't you? Some of it is the very elementary level: 'We just want the UWE degree and we'll do whatever you require us to do in order to get that' UK04 Senior Management/Leader

I think they [CSA] also take it as a point of pride that they've got such a strong tie with UWE. They seem to be very reflective in terms of their bettering the partnership and bettering their delivery of the subjects and they're very much... the feedback I've got from them is effectively that they've really benefited themselves, it's changed the way they do things, it's improved their practice and that they constantly look to do that. They have an academic culture there, a professional culture, where they seem very, very focused on that kind of improvement and delivery. UK01 Professional Services

I think with partners, they are different, they have different amounts of experience in delivering higher education. Some of them have worked with partners in a kind of UK framework before, others haven't. UK12 Senior Professional Services

A key issue is concerning the management and culture of the institution:

I think we certainly need to get management buy in from Sri Lanka that we are doing these things for a reason so that they can then be the people or transmit that through their staff and explain why we are doing certain things and what the importance of it is and why that gives their degree and the degree that they supply to their students value in the market. So I think it's about we would help their leadership to really embrace that. UK10 Senior Management/Leader

With CSA there is data with regard to active steps to create an academic culture modelling the expectations of UWE:

The institution itself was not a cohesive unit where I could say, 'look, we are managing, we are doing all this on our own so what I'm now trying to do and is bring this slowly, because it's not easy changing the attitudes of the staff, they are still used to this old system, 'I have my practise outside and why should I waste my time here? I can do my job and go off'. SL02 Senior Management/Leader

And of course, the UWE coming here made me strengthen the awards we put in place because they have a very clear cut administrative process, very mechanical, but, it is much more precise with dates and you know that has to be amalgamated

with our year planning, and all that you know, co-ordinated. These are other little things that I could do, designations and posts and committees, which everything seems to be operating now and [name] is the liaison between but it's such between UWE and CSA, so it's a corporate governance system that has been brought in over the last two years and put into place which I believe would make the institution or will make the institution run smoothly. SL02 Senior Management/Leader

However senior management at NS has been subject to both governance issues and to change:

I think in some ways it is leadership because you don't have a leader saying this is what you need to know, you need to sort this out, get on with it, learn it, do it. Or let me help you, how can I do some development so that you can actually improve your skills here. UK12 Senior Professional Services

We actually saw some improvement when he [previous executive dean at NS] was there and when he said he was leaving it was like, oh god, you could just see a backward slide and we have. From my point of view when [name] was there, I had someone to talk to about the operations, about how things were going to happen and when they were going to be done, how they were going to be done. He passed that message on to his team, he tried to get them to do it, tried to improve the way they did it, pushed for them to do it and he's gone. UK12 Senior Professional Services

5.5 The impact of transnational education on quality assurance

The state/private sector distinction has a direct impact on the quality assurance process for TNE as the private sector is highly reliant on the state sector, for staff, and the previous experiences and attitudes they bring to TNE. The impact of multiple TNE partnerships in the country and their quality assurance practices have the potential to impact on perceptions on how quality assurance might be done and on the development of quality assurance regimes in the country

People don't know about these things, because people don't know what is the quality assurance, what I feel is we have better quality assurance sometimes than in State Universities, because when it comes to the State Universities the... obviously I have to say the marks are not double marked, especially when it comes to the coursework the coursework's are not double marked. SL05 Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

it will enhance the trustworthiness of the programme that we are offering, that's why if we have a quality programme, if we have this quality assurance part here, the people will trust us about the college and they don't want to... like they can't say 'Okay we don't know how they are setting papers, whether they're setting too easy papers, and going to give you the degree'. Because these people... students

are paying money, we are going to give the degree SL05 Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

Quality perceptions for the UK respondents echoed the quality assurance process and confidence in the system as the deliverer of quality through compliance as long as the staff are competent. In Sri Lanka the dominant perspective is that quality is delivered through quality inputs, that is excellent students and excellent staff who are rigorously taught and assessed through examinations only. For the NS staff exposed to the UWE teaching, learning and assessment together with the quality assurance framework the experience was demanding and revelatory,

in state universities you get the cream and they tell you teach well SL10 Senior Academic/Leader, NS

it's the quality of the student - entry quality of the student is very high in the state university. So here it's not the case so you need to have more interaction with the student. SL10 Senior Academic/Leader, NS

the quality of the lecturers being able to adhere to the standards and being consistent with all the students I think those are the three important things in my perspective about quality. SL08 Academic, NS

success criteria is when we can see that we are running programmes at both ends to the same standard and we are producing graduates who are of equal standard and they can work at either ends of the world UK07 Senior Academic/Link Tutor

Our quality systems requirements they accept it but I don't know if they agree with it. But I think at the end what they do they accept what we say. So in many occasions they don't even try to argue the point. UK09 Senior Academic, Link Tutor

5.6 The impact of transnational education on teaching, learning and the student experience

As well as importing the provider institution's quality assurance processes TNE, in this case, is having an impact of pedagogic practices. UWE (and UK) teaching practice is embedded in the curriculum and teaching strategies for each individual module being delivered in Sri Lanka. Through access to the UWE virtual learning environment, Blackboard, the Sri Lankan staff use UWE resources for the teaching and assessment of the modules. This is also having an impact in introducing these pedagogic approaches into Sri Lanka, something only previously available through study abroad.

Well erm personally this is my belief, the education system in the UK is excellent from what I have experienced and erm having this relationship between NS and UWE it actually, it does not only help the students but it actually helps the lecturers to actually properly organise the work and deliver the right level of right standard for education. SL11 Academic, NS

when it comes to the State University we were... I'm not criticising the educational system but it was basically some kind of a parrot-like situation we had SL05 Senior Academic and Programme Leader NS

But here students have time to understand things, they didn't have time to understand...SL05 Senior Academic and Programme Leader NS

when I was a student, on the other hand we were kind of afraid to go and talk to our lecturers because, I don't know, it might be our personal characteristics. Still any of us from the best didn't go and ask from them why we got this, and where we went wrong, that kind of thing. SL05 Senior Academic and Programme Leader NS

only recently [in Sri Lanka] we have followed this feedback for the coursework, earlier there was no feedback for the student, it was just marked and then given to the student. But here sometimes I feel we have a better quality in this feedback than setting exams, marking exams, we have... yes, because once like when we were the students in the State University sometimes we didn't know how we got this mark particularly. We don't know, and sometimes we... sometimes we were like 'Oh Doctor, how do I get this mark?' SL05 Senior Academic and Programme Leader NS

The franchise relationship also provides constrained access to UWE's library services and a bounded set of online database access negotiated with publishers for students and staff access. While this is a sub-set of the resources available to students at UWE in the UK this resource represents a significant benefit to both staff and students at both CSA and NS.

The findings provide evidence is that there is knowledge transfer occurring with TNE that internationalises teaching and learning and that provides access to the quality concepts and processes that are said to safeguard the reputation of UK higher education as one of high quality.

5.7 Exploring the findings through the conceptual framework.

The literature review led to the production of a conceptual map for quality assurance in TNE (Figure 2.6, p.51). In this section the findings are analysed using this map and its key concepts.

In terms of the purpose of the conceptual map and the achievement of effective quality assurance in TNE, one of the UWE senior management/leader participants had been on a visit to NS and in discussing the nature of the problems of quality assurance in TNE was forthright in raising the issue of understanding being at the heart of the issue, whether at UWE or NS. This extract captures what a characteristic of ineffective quality assurance might be:

I think what management understands from the quality and standards doesn't always filter down to the people who are delivering on the ground, who are doing the moderation processes, who are checking the module specs and so on in the quality assurance side of that. I think that our own staff sometimes don't really understand why we are doing these kinds of things and I think that nearly all the

*staff in Sri Lanka don't understand why we are doing these kinds of things. UK10
Senior Management/Leader*

It is this potential absence of understanding the what, and why, of quality assurance that leads to an environment in which policies and procedures are implemented in a process in which the powerful (UWE) demands compliance at the partner and where problems with compliance are a constant feature of the process. A number of risks to quality were identified in the data, mainly with regard to resources:

maybe parent university has a good process but even then to implement it we need to have certain resources here also. SL02 Senior Manager/Leader NS

I always thought that for something so big and with so many students involved, and it also carries such a high amount of business risk, perhaps more resource should have been put in its direction UK05 Professional Services

we are running with limited staff because initially we can't have a lot of lecturers because it is not practical with the cost and all these things. SL09 Senior Academic, NS

the amount of work which module leaders is supposed to give in order to give justice to the role, to the quality monitoring, the amount of time is much more than what is being offered at present and therefore it was very difficult with the link tutor to put pressure on the module leaders to deliver on time UK07 Senior Academic, Link Tutor

The articulation of risk is from both the NS and UWE staff in relation to NS. This may be due to the well-established relationship with CSA and the academic infrastructure and culture embedded in CSA before UWE TNE provision began.

5.8 Socialisation and visits

There was substantial data supporting the case for social interaction from all levels at all instructions and in all areas of competence. The data shows demand for reciprocal socialisation at senior management, academic and administrative levels. The participants recognise the potential costs of this and the need to have a purpose for a visit, however there is data that recognises the importance of making them.

if the financials are that tight then I don't think you've necessarily got the right partner. UK06 Academic/TNE Development

The visits do seem to make a difference over time in terms of understanding the context of the project, the resources available, the levels of understanding, and the development of the relationship:

every year there was an improvement because of the links we had with the programme leaders there with all the visits we had and so on. UK09 Senior Academic, Link Tutor

I always thought that for something so big and with so many students involved, and it also carries such a high amount of business risk, perhaps more resource should have been put in. More time could have been devoted or more resource could've gone into it and perhaps from the academic services or admin point of view there should have been far more emphasis on continuous improvement, things like that. UK05 Professional Services

I think to a certain extent we did a lot of that [staff development]. The issue is we have to repeat it all the time because the member of staff keeps changing. I think in the last two years it's getting better because we have more stability in terms of staff and so on. UK09 Senior Academic, Link Tutor

because I really do feel that physical visits are when you really begin to truly understand how a partnership works so earlier on when you get there, you sit round a table, you look at people in the whites of their eyes, you understand the landscape, you understand little things like how far they commute and how long their day is, who their kids are, what their life is. UK11 Senior Professional Services

then we had G [visit]. He was really helpful for us, and when we were discussing about this marking off the project reports and all these things it was really helpful for me, and it was easy to discuss about things like this. We had several conferences as well at that time, so for those things it was easy, it was easier. SL05 Senior Academic and Programme Leader

you use these visits to consolidate knowledge and understanding of the processes but also to extend the relationship. UK06 Academic/TNE Development

always thought it was quite important to understand the differences in resources that we have between ourselves and some of the international partners. UK05 Professional Services

challenges it's not thought of as something in the abstract, but they know the people. UK04 Senior Management/Leader

I mean you get to see a whole variety of things. You get to understand the local context. You get to understand the facilities. You get to meet all their staff. You get to meet the students. It's a much richer understanding, how much of a commonality from a cultural perspective, from a partnership intent perspective do we have. I think you've got a much stronger sense of establishing that in formal and informal settings that you are able to achieve during some sort of institutional visit. UK04 Senior Management/Leader

I do suspect there are things that I knew about that I wouldn't have known about otherwise. I think I knew a lot more about what was going on with the management and about the future of staffing levels and things like that, and who's thinking about moving and who's not. So I think it gave me an informal

knowledge that while not – not necessarily something that I could talk officially about to other people at UKHEI, but you could steer things in the right kind of direction. UK08 Senior Academic, Link Tutor

at strategic level is the most important factor whereby the management of both institutions they have established some level of trust. Making sure that the decision makers have got the same goal at both ends, both institutions and not be driven entirely by finances. UK07 Senior Academic, Link Tutor

it's always useful to see it for yourself what really is happening and what the relationship is between staff that it's much harder to tell through correspondence and even video conferencing. So I formed an unclear impression of the way things were working in NS which is that there is the leader, autocratic leadership who has decided they are going to do certain things in a certain way and really there was a massive drop between what he was doing and the people actually delivering. There was a lack of middle management. UK10 Senior Management/Leader

The majority of visits were conducted in a uni-directional way. Only one member of staff from NS, the academic registrar (SL06 Senior Administrator), had visited UWE:

although we say we try to maintain the same quality, maybe in the Sri Lankan context it's not possible to obtain the same because- and again, cultural differences. Because I have visited UK UWE, so I know how it is, like even the canteens, the student areas and everything, of course they charge a higher price but it's different. SL06 Senior Administrator, NS

Academic staff at NS expressed a desire to visit and pointed out the one-way direction of visits:

UWE's always having an idea what's happening in Northshore but Northshore doesn't have visitors there. I think it might help because when you go there and you see how things are happening, how lectures are going, how students are participating, how students are addressed I think. SL13 Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

UWE staff also commented on the value that visits to UWE: would have

for them to have maybe more collaboration or an exchange perhaps between people from... because obviously we send people out to NS but it might also be beneficial for people to come here as well and see how we do things at UWE and actually get hands-on and sit down and meet with people from all across the people that interface with them as an organisation to actually see how we work and what our expectations are in person. I think that could be useful. UWE01 Professional Services

5.9 Communication

Most of the comments on communication came from the UWE professional services team. Comments from academics and link tutors were mainly visits.

I think communication is incredibly critical, building up a relationship that's open and that's two way. I think if you can have that communication and have exchanges with people where you are honest and nobody feels threatened, nobody feels they have to be defensive, then I think you can get your quality in place, you can say to people, 'I would do it like this, would you do it like that?' You can have those kind of dialogues and exchanges. UK12 Senior Professional Services

The mode remote communication was usually by email and there a range of issues with its use which might be regarded as cultural. There was a desire to use more phone calls and video conferencing issue raising about the technical infrastructure and support:

Communication with this partner is done by email, solely email. We don't Skype. It has been suggested in the past that we do, but we don't use Skype particularly. I'm finding with other partners that that is more and more frequent that people are more and more willing to actually just Skype or we pick up a phone. But this is just email, which makes communication harder. UK12 Senior Professional Services

but I think the email communication is difficult. There's a lot of misinterpretation on both sides of those conversations and I think yeah, that's caused its own problems in, this is how we want this regulation to be applied, or this is what we want to happen here. You put that in an email and [interruption] whatever the phrasing is or whatever, it doesn't always come across. Like I've had people come in and say to me, can you come and tell me what you think this email means. UK12 Senior Professional Services

I would be keen to encourage more regular Skype conversations and telephone conversations with our administrators to their counterparts, to have that contact more. Again, I think that that is something we are doing more and more with new partners. We do have more people picking up the phone. We've got international dialling on our phones now which has been a bit of a struggle. We're finding ways to access Skype even though the university doesn't support it. We're working on ways around that so that people can speak more regularly in different kind of formats than email. But I think with NS again, we struggle to get past the email as the main form of communication. UK12 Senior Professional Services

Some of our team members have had a habit of writing quite long involved emails feeling that they are trying to build a working relationship, and that's a good way of doing it because it's not a factual email it's more of a here is some background, here is some context. Actually one of the things that is the cultural thing that we're really encouraging our team is to try to be much clearer in their email communications and to not worry so much about the niceties, whilst perhaps include those to a level, but also be very clear on what we're actually asking the

partner to do. I think that's something that we can be better at as a team and were working with the team on, because some are really good at it. I think it's the way we use the English language differently in different countries and the way we structure our sentences can be different. You know, just the way we break down sentences. If we use long sentences with lots of different explanations buried within that, I think it's difficult for NS to interpret what we're saying. UK02 Senior Professional Services

5.10 Relationships

The findings establish that all participants consider that TNE is a relationship in which they have an interest and which brings benefits to the process of quality assurance:

Engage regularly at different levels and foster a culture of respect and understanding of collegiality. I think one of the key pitfalls is just expecting things to happen from myself but a relationship needs to be worked on a number of levels, it's something that won't go away, it's something that needs to be nurtured to be fostered on a daily basis. Relationships are about the human beings that are involved within them so it's about maintaining that, it's about owning trust, it's about demonstrating the credibility, it's about ensuring that you deliver on your policies, keep the wheels greased as it were. UK01 Senior Professional Services

There is an expressed need that the relationship is one of mutual respect towards each other:

I think that's a sign of a good working relationship that both ways the communication is done in a – try to be proactive, kind of be understanding and in a positive way and in a professionally courteous way as well because we recognize that she's under a lot of pressure, busy. I think she recognizes it's the same for us and so we try to respect each other and be personable, but equally clear in our communications. UK01 Senior Professional Services

The importance good communication is highlighted throughout the data on working relations and how communication any mode builds mutual respect and supportive relationships.

according to my experience yes both parties respect each other because ... so when you're going to come to moderation [the link tutor] never force anything so you can increase this mark ok it is like that it is just a suggestion] so she always value our ... ok, academic knowledge and it is like that because of that with the relationship that I have with link tutor that I feel it is equal. SL09 Senior Academic, Programme Leader

what I felt was even though I believe it's a foreign partnership there should be direct communication with the relevant module leader, programme leader whoever the representative from the parent university on a regular basis, in here like we get at least get two or three e-mails from a module leader every week it's very regular they are checking on us like asking for guidance. SL08 Academic

I very much respect what our partnership institutions are doing and that they are often very progressive for their environment and that actually the people there are often very educated; have industry experience so I think that helped to kind of think of people as your equal and I think it helped to have social interactions
UK08 Senior Academic/Link Tutor

I think it's symptomatic of our immaturity as a TNE provider that we have a system here that produces a particular type of service for a particular need i.e. our undergraduates, primarily undergraduates here at [inaudible 0:25:36.0], that then tries – if we try and put something into that system that doesn't fit and this is a common problem, it doesn't matter whether we're talking about part-time students or degree apprenticeships or TNE, it's we struggle with activities that don't suit the dominant model. UK04 Senior Manager/Leader

There are also critical relationships within the partner, in this case NS which also have a cultural dimension:

it is always men who are in power NS and they tend to have recruited younger women, or young men to the other roles and they tend to – there's definitely the power hierarchy is very firmly in place with little two-way communication and quite a lot of distrust between the hierarchy UK08 Senior Academic/Link Tutor

because he's a professor and what Programme Leader didn't feel there was almost any point in her talking to him about his poor teaching and poor commitment because he would never listen to her because she's lower in the educational hierarchy, even though she's the Programme Leader, he's Module Leader – he's a Prof and so she got me to talk to him because I'm from the Partner Institution and that has a hierarchy. UK01 Senior Professional Services

The impact of communication and relationship building is seen to be on understanding:

One of the things was when we got in the partnership, the agreement and all that, when it was explained to us and set up, the quality assurance aspect was there. But through the years, they have I think also explained the requirement of quality assurance and what it is for. So, we have understood. SL04 Academic and Senior Administrator CSA

A perceived problem of relationship building and knowledge development is the turnover of staff.

We struggled because there have been a number of staff turnovers, people know it and then a there won't be anybody to transfer that knowledge quickly and efficiently to the people that are coming. SL13 Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

I noticed distinct periods where there were differences in quality and I think that coincided with changeovers of staff, so would get marks that were late, we'd get

information that was late. There would be work we'd need adjustment. UK01 Professional Services

understanding in terms of what we were looking for, that was lost when they left. I think there's a great deal of cultural capital, academic capital perhaps, that was lost. UK01 Professional Services

we need to repeat, repeat, repeat, repeat, repeat, the information for it to go in and get done. That's the hard thing. I think that's why there's no moving on because you're always going back and doing things you know that you've covered before. UK12 Senior Professional Services

5.11 Culture

There was a wide range of observations from both UK and Sri Lanka perspectives that recognised cultural issues that impact both positively and negatively or simply differently, that prompts further cases for socialisation and staff development opportunities.

Some of these issues are about organisational culture, some can be described as cultural stereotypes however there is no one prevailing cultural perceptions and some respondents felt there were no significant cultural differences.

an assumption that their background, their educational background of their partners is not so good and that yeah, I think there are a lot of assumptions and they didn't really need to try and find out anything about the people they're working with. UK08 Senior Academic/Link Tutor

the staff here they are committed to their teaching, it's just that they're not committed to the academic process which probably they're not aware of or they didn't know that, they just come and teach and go and, so what, "that's not my job". Like "you fill the forms – I will teach and go". SL02 Senior Management/Leader, CSA

Sometimes I feel overloaded but still so far I enjoy that culture because, personally I think that when I can work, I should work. So, therefore, I like to work with deadline, and the other thing is the moderation comments, I'm so happy with having comments for my work. So I feel I learn and I can upgrade myself with comments SL07 Academic, NS

it's probably not their perception that's at fault, and if there are concerns over standards then actually they might well be rooted in something else be it the fact that it is more difficult to look at these programmes in Sri Lanka or just be a lack of experience compared to UK providers, or a lack of Governments or framework compared to UK providers. UK05 Professional Services

I think my issues were effectively down to people who were inexperienced on an academic level which was causing a lot of the issues that I encountered, and I

think that was just something is really down to time and staff training rather than anything I would say were cultural issues. UK01 Professional Services

lot of people referred to it as cultural differences but actually I didn't necessarily see it as a question of culture. I think it always struck me as just a question of circumstance more than culture, you know, I kind of got on with everyone well there. From my own administrative point of view I always found them fairly easy to understand and to get along with. I have always had really cordial meetings with them and so all the communication I did was generally very easy to understand. I think where there were occasional issues and misunderstanding those tended to centre around UWE's regulations and our sort of higher education regulations, but I don't think it was due to culture I just think it was perhaps due to... due to language mainly. UK05 Professional Services

There also seem to be perceived cultural differences with regard to students

In Sri Lanka that [student representation] is clearly not an expectation. They are not seeing the students in any way as being part of that process and although we had tried to get them to engage with the idea of student forums. Student staff rep forums, having student reps and student rep councils; it was not a strong movement for them. The leadership didn't see that that could bring any benefit to them and viewed the students as rather an irritant in the system..... I think it's a cultural thing, yes that they were not expecting that the students should have any voice in their education and that's not really how we perceive things do we? UK10 Senior Management/Leader

the cultural differences of the students. That the students behave in a different way to our students, so when you put in a programme here, we have very different relationships in terms of two-way communication and the formality of it. It's much more informal here with collegiate whereas it's more teachers and the taught in NS; although many Module Leaders were very friendly with their students and knew them very well, it still had that kind of more hierarchical teacher/school-ish feel that it does here. UWE08 Senior Academic/Link Tutor

There is also what might be perceived as a cultural issue with regard to how administrators are perceived with NS, and perhaps more generally in Sri Lankan organisations, although this is not evidenced at CSA.

I think it seems to me that she [senior administrator] needs a lot more focused support and I think where we have two organisations of very different size, that it would be advantageous for them to have maybe a couple of people working very, very closely in terms of the partnership and that could be maybe the focal point of what they do to take some of the pressure off her, where obviously we have whole teams. UK01 Professional Services

Culturally there are some barriers to achieving that in terms of some administrators not feeling that they might be able to talk openly and honestly with

us about things that are happening because it might a different culture where they are that perhaps that's not appropriate. UK02 Senior Professional Services

I think also what I picked up in terms of working with the registrar, [name] is that I think she's pretty much a one-woman show in terms of what she does but I think the administrative culture there is very much just pass all this to her to deal with and then it comes out. UK01 Professional Services

Other cultural issues raised included English language and levels of understanding, perspectives and priorities:

So I think it is cultural that we use English in a different way. I don't think it's impossible to overcome. Like I say, I'm in a lucky position in our team that I've met many people face to face and if you meet someone face to face and talk to them, you can pick up better on how they use English than if you only have ever met that person by email. It's just being able to do that I think makes it a bit easier to work with someone. UK12 Senior Professional Services

You walk in and people don't know what the heck you're talking about and you know you need to keep a closer eye on that. You need to be watching and I need to let my team know, we need to drive this much harder, we need to push these deadlines more, we need to chase this more. UK12 Senior Professional Services

Also recognize that the partner might be looking at things quite differently to us and not just from a point of view of coming from a different institution, but culturally as well and that we need to recognize that they might have different demands on them than us. UK02 Senior Professional Services

all sorts of cultural issues there. I think we need to acknowledge [particular sensitivities, but there is a degree of colonisation to this as well that I think we'd be remiss as a UK institution not to recognize and not to operate within that context. UK04 Senior Management/Leader

Yeah I guess it's about cultural sensitivity. I don't know. I would call it [inaudible 0:16:07.3] cultural sophistication, but that sounds quite elitist. It's about being open to understanding, and empathy I guess cultural empathy that not the rest of the world does things in the way that we happen to do them here in Bristol and in fact celebrating that I think is where it really works. UK04 Senior Management/Leader

UWE staff in TNE were open to the issue of inter-cultural communication and one had been on a training course and expresses the value.

If we offer intercultural communication training to people as well, the university runs quite a good course on that, so if people wish to they can go on that. It's again [intercultural communication] about that idea I think that there are different cultures that exist across the world, they're not necessarily at a national level, they

might be at an organisational level, our team level, there are ways of working. It talks about cultures, what that is, what that means in terms of people's beliefs and how it can translate down into people's behaviours and their attitudes towards things. UK12 Senior Professional Services

5.12 Competences and competencies

The literature review cited Boyatzis (1982) in distinguishing between competences as organisational requirement fulfilled through roles and competencies being the skills and knowledge of individuals. This was useful distinction to bring to the analysis.

In terms of volume the main issues raised were with regard to competencies:

Interpersonal skills. Yeah I think you have to be very prompt as well. Your response for any communication first of all will be quick. Also need to be more – I don't know how to say it just be more conscientious. UK03 Senior Academic/Link Tutor

Definitely being able to communicate and have open communications with colleagues. Also like I touched on before, having quite clear and succinct communications. UK02 Senior Profession Services

problem solving and attitude towards problem solving that doesn't say oh we've got to stop this because it's got problems, it's a case of right we've got a problem what are we going to do about it? So a positive attitude. UK06 Academic/TNE Development

pro-activity would possibly be.... be top of the list... that willingness to try and engage with people... try and engage with people repeatedly maybe, you know I have always been quite not afraid to chase people necessarily and not afraid to kind of ask the questions, and I think there is an element of that simply needing to be done I think. UK05 Professional Services

I think acknowledging and respecting the other opinion is important in developing this level of relationship. So this establishes the trust. UK07 Senior Academic/Link Tutor

Ability to convey confidence, I think you need to give people the belief that they can trust you to make something right within... within your scope. UK06 Academic/TNE Development

Trying to deliver the message in a nice way without insulting the other party will produce better results than abrupt and direct approach so that's an inter-personal skill which I don't claim I have but I have seen other colleagues doing it better than me. UK07 Senior Academic/Link Tutor

In terms of competences there were some specific comments about the leadership role and the administrative role NS which have already been highlighted.

The link tutor role (a competence regarding communication and problem solving for the relationship) received some comments with regard to the skills and attitudes of individuals holding the role, suggesting their unsuitability. In terms of competencies there was data referencing skills and attitudes required for the role and reference to problems when these skills and attitudes were absent. All of these comments come from UWE professional services participants and they are essentially observations about link tutors in TNE work and the variety of skills and attitudes they experience.

The ones where we have a really good working relationship with a link tutor makes a massive, massive difference, you know really is key to the smooth running of the operational side because – and the ones that really communicate with us if they are not sure about. UK02 Senior Professional Services

something perhaps pop and see us or ring us and have a conversation with us because things can get lost in email, but the link tutors to understand where we are coming from and how we might need things to progress. UK02 Senior Professional Services

[link tutors] It is very varied and it's really noticeable to me, particularly my role where I work across all the partners and then working across all of the team I really see that some of my team benefit from a different style of link tutor than others. It really makes a difference to how they are able to do their work. It's really useful if we have a really good working relationship with the link tutor because they are our contact within the faculty. UK01 Professional Services

I feel that academics – some do it quite well, some seem unable to communicate within the university, let alone outside of the university and it is a struggle. UK12 Senior Professional Services

it's time, it's a cultural shift, it's a different way of working, and I think we've seen it in other parts of the university, it was like that there and now they're way more open to it, they're far more open to the idea of actually talking to people, picking up the phone, picking up Skype, WhatsApp, FaceTime and whatever. They're far, far more open to it. UK12 Senior Professional Services

maybe the types of courses that we run that you don't communicate necessarily in the same way that a psychologist would communicate or something like that. I don't know, a software engineer just doesn't talk in the same way. I don't know. But there definitely seems to be a reluctance to do it [UWE academic staff] and I think that's something that has to be overcome if the faculty wants its TNE to expand, we need to start. UK12 Senior Professional Services

It can be really helpful if we've got a link tutor who is the face of that [inaudible 0:09:56.4] who can almost help us move that over and go out and spread that word and perhaps give them advance warning that it's going to be happening. Also almost the door knocking go, have you seen that's come in, could you please have a look at that, we know it's a bit tight and it's not ideal, but that's what we're

dealing with, we've got to try and be ready for the board. UK01 Professional Services

Yeah I guess it's about cultural sensitivity. I don't know. I would call it cultural sophistication, but that sounds quite elitist. It's about being open to understanding, and empathy I guess cultural empathy that not the rest of the world does things in the way that we happen to do them here in Bristol and in fact celebrating that I think is where it really works. There is a degree of – I was going to say persistence, but I'm not sure that I'm just talking about UWE systems now, whether there is something more common around kind of TNE engagement, it requires a greater degree of patience. UK04 Senior Management/Leader

I actually think there's something like a link tutor should kind of be its own role really. I think that's probably enough work there on a day to day basis in terms of supporting teams in the UK and supporting the international partners, that that's almost something that needs to be broken down into its own role UK05 Professional Services

I think again it comes back to academic administrative split between the registrar and also the understanding they have of UWE's processes and what we expect from them but I think there probably needs to be a great deal of support given to people because it's quite specialist knowledge and I think that it requires a certain sort of set of skills to get your head round it, particularly from an administrative point of view. UK01 Professional Services

The above comments can be interpreted as support for the Link Tutor as a competence requirement but also as a critique of the competencies of some of the individuals holding the position.

5.13 The post-colonial context and institutional relationships

Djerasimovic argued that, 'on an institutional level, the frequently used term "partnership", which implies a degree of equality, often hides a power hierarchy constructed by both sides, a lack of respect reported by host academics and even a rhetoric of colonialism employed by some of the onshore academics in describing this relationship' (Djerasimovic, 2014, p. 205).

Expressions of power relations were not explicitly voiced, with the exception of two of the UK participants. From the perspective of the Sri Lankan participants this relationship was expressed in a number of ways.

First there is the use of the language of 'parent' or 'mother university' used by three of the Sri Lankan participants (SL09, SL08) which may indicate a parent/child hierarchical perception or may just be a vernacular phrase. There are many references by the NS staff to their own inexperience and to a learning experience although this language is not loaded with negative connotations, rather they are positive about the learning being experienced. Power is implicitly used was to refer to relative levels of experience in the processes of UWE. There was confidence expressed by the participants that they were equal and treated as equals in terms of their academic experience.

The emphasis was about the need of the Sri Lankan participants to comply with a series of processes, including, quality assurance and to be subject to monitoring, reporting, and 'chasing'.

From the UK perspective this was an expectation that was non-negotiable and the explicit requirement for all partners in collaborative provision.

we are, in my perception, the driving force, but that we have a willing partner. That's how I feel. UK02 Senior Professional Services

feel that we are often having to be the ones that give the guidance and give the way forward and the solutions. I recognize why that is because at the end of the day we are there [inaudible 0: 14:57.6] for them to sort of seek guidance on our regulations or our procedures. UK02 Senior Professional Services

I wouldn't say it was equal. I'd say they were much more reliant upon NS and particularly in terms of much more work being done, I think, by academic staff here at UWE and there wasn't as much independence in terms of being able to take ownership, I think, at NS compared to what we would expect here at the university. UK01 Professional Services

NS, as you're well aware, is a kind of outpost, very small numbers of students – I think they only had sort of seven on a three year course recently; so partly the numbers mean that they don't have power, I think you have to have equal student numbers to have power. UK08 Senior Academic/Link Tutor

I feel we are both equal, but we are not that much experienced as you are. SL05 Senior Academic and Programme Leader NS

the relationship with NS has not been one on which there are kind of two broadly equal partners. It has been very much a relationship of degree awarding body and the franchisee I guess as it were. UK11 Senior Professional Services

5.14 Summary of Findings

Partnerships are difficult. There is no kind of magic wand or silver bullet really. It's that they are very, very labour intensive, they're time consuming but there are rewards there. I think that it's an iterative process [to become mature in terms of quality assurance]. It can be a very long drawn out process. I have seen partnerships go through five, ten year cycles and it does take time. Bodies in the UK that go in with an expectation that within kind of two years you have a partner that will understand everything that you're doing and it will be really straight forward to manage and not time consuming. I think there's a massive naivety within that. I guess it depends the starting point that you have and the level of maturity at the time really. But partnerships need to be cultivated. They need to nurture. UK11 Senior Professional Services

CSA and NS are perceived differently in the findings. CSA would appear to be associated with a 'maturity' in academic culture and management and engagement with the quality assurance process. NS is perceived in much more problematic terms, some regarding resource issues, which in turn has led to staff instability and the loss of learning. The problems perceived at NS are articulated by staff from both institutions. The difference between the two institutions show that there are no intrinsic cultural barriers to quality assurance in TNE but that TNE operates in a context where cultural issues and inter-cultural communication are important issues for consideration

The findings are immensely rich with insight into TNE and quality assurance in this case. The data is wide ranging and is not evidently marked by caution or concerns over confidentiality by the participants although this is my interpretation.

The findings were analysed by looking at some major themes from the literature review and then using the concept map developed as a result of the literature. In the next chapter a conceptual framework is presented to support the identification of competences and competencies to support organisational and staff development that could be applied to take into account the individual circumstances facing any TNE provision, provider or host institution.

Chapter 6 Discussion

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter the findings are discussed in both the national and institutional context. A conceptual framework is proposed for quality assurance in TNE and discussed. The use and potential value of the conceptual framework is considered, including a discussion on how it might be used to develop approaches to quality assurance that can build HE capacity in the country.

6.2 Quality assurance in the national context

In the UK, since 2013, the government under, firstly Minister David Willetts and more recently Under Jo Johnson, Minister of State for Universities and Science, at the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (until 2017) has been seeking to develop TNE as an educational export for the UK economy and a possible replacement for inbound international recruitment to address the concerns of the government about immigration and the inclusion of international students in the net immigration statistics (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, 2017)

This is a highly competitive market with significant activity from US, Australian, German, and Netherlands institutions. According to the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), (2015), the UK has a well-deserved reputation world-wide for providing high quality and well-respected higher education. If the reputation of UK HE is based on quality then that quality needs to be safeguarded. The strategic and operational management of transnational education delivery will strongly influence the future development of UK activity.

Higher education institutions are recommended to share knowledge of good practice in relation to the organisation and management of transnational education provision. The UK government says it wants to see 15-20% growth in overseas enrolments at its universities, as part of a major new industrial strategy to ensure international education becomes “one of Britain’s great growth industries of the 21st century” (BIS 2015). However, some say (PIE, 2013) the goal clashes with restrictive immigration policies introduced since 2010. The Education UK recruitment website, which is run by the British Council and attracted 2.2 million unique visitors last year, will also expand to promote UK boarding schools, English language schools, colleges, universities and the transnational education market (PIE, 2013). While 75% of British education exports come from international students in the UK, expanding UK transnational education will be key to future plans. This will be supported by reinforcing quality assurance frameworks for language providers, schools, colleges and universities (PIE, 2013)

A striking finding from the data is the political, economic and social dynamics of TNE in Sri Lanka in the context of the wider higher education sector in the country and globally.

The current debate about TNE and the state/private sector distinction in Sri Lanka, with concerns related in the findings about the quality and standards of the TNE/private sector, is similar to those that emerged in the UK in the years after the 1992 expansion of the HE sector

in the UK, as discussed by Brown (2004), Brennen and Shah (2000), Morley (2003) and Saarinen (2010) amongst others.

The Sri Lankan state universities appear to be similar to the pre-92 universities in the UK in terms of their autonomy and their association of quality as an outcome of putting excellent staff and excellent students together, without the need for an external agency to tell them how to do it. Quality assurance is closely tied to the professionalism of the academic staff. The arrival of TNE has surfaced a similar range of concerns about quality where ‘the insertion of the quality discourse into higher education is an example of the changing relations between universities and the state’ (Morley, 2003 p. viii). Her analysis is tied to a social and political moment in the UK that occurred alongside the expansion of higher education with the former polytechnics being given university status which she argues was tied in with the globalisation of higher education. In the UK, this was accompanied by shifts of power from the autonomous university to the state via regulatory authority, and resistance, discontent, enforcement and normalisation under a new managerialism regime (Morley, 2003).

TNE is seemingly heralding a change to higher education in Sri Lanka that challenges the state sector and challenges the regulatory framework in the country. Staff who traverse both sectors, though their employment, are exposed to differences in teaching and learning, assessment, quality assurance processes and relationships with students which contributes to that discussion.

That shift in power has not yet happened in Sri Lanka but the discourse about quality is occurring, framed by growth in the private sector through TNE as the participants in this account relate. In TNE in Sri Lanka, the provider institutions are transferring a readymade quality assurance regime into the host institutions. Morley (2003) argues that quality assurance in the UK brought a shift from professional ethics to accountability through a culture of audit and accountability. Brennan et al. (1996), at the time, asked ‘how can something so self-evidently desirable as quality become so controversial?’ (p. 1). The answer to that question is that quality is about power, and the replacement of professional responsibility by institutional responsibility for quality, accompanied by institution wide policies and procedures shifting power to the centre and to a new managerial culture requiring compliance with that system (Brennan et al., 1996). Brennan and Morley were writing over 20 years ago and since then quality has turned from this controversial concept into an everyday issue in higher education in Europe (Saarinen, 2010). It is now a technical process, something people comply with as part and parcel of their academic responsibilities in Europe. The findings indicated that this is not the case in Sri Lanka. The debate in Europe has moved on to whether quality assurance is technical performance promoting acts of compliance or an enhancement activity promoting acts of reflection, improvement and self-development (Saarinen, 2010). The debate in Sri Lanka is current.

According to the findings, in Sri Lankan state universities, the main method of assessment is the closed book examination undertaken in secure environments with no current concerns about corruption. The arrival of private sector institutions and TNE has raised the question of whether students can buy degrees or that corrupt staff will ‘sell them’. The implementation and compliance with quality assurance processes therefore offers safeguards, and the knowledge built through the engagement with such processes by local staff which can be applied more widely in the sector. Quality assurance can reassure employers, public bodies

and government that TNE in the private sector in Sri Lanka does display quality and meet standards in its provision in the face of concern and attack from the state sector. It becomes a 'kite mark' for TNE in the marketization of higher education.

This investigation takes place as a quality culture represented by TNE is being transferred into the higher education system of Sri Lanka. The culture is not entirely alien, in that the post-colonial relationship between the UK and Sri Lanka means many are familiar with the UK educational model, but the TNE versions of UK education would seem to be perceived as different due their association with the private and profit-making sector. The interesting issue is that the private sector in Sri Lanka is staffed by graduates or visiting lecturers from the state sector. It is their attitudes to, and engagement with, the quality agenda that will determine the role of TNE in capacity building and TNE's future as a permanent feature in the host countries or as a transitional phase in the capacity building of the host nations while they build the higher education systems they want to build.

The data points towards the importance of the quality assurance process in assuring quality and standards, building capacity in bringing understanding of quality and standards to the country. The staff employed at the Sri Lankan institutions have understood the rationale behind the quality assurance regime that accompanies TNE. They understand it protects the student from rogue providers and that it seeks comparability with the education delivery in the UK. They are also conscious that they work in the private sector, which does not have a reputation for quality. In the Sri Lankan higher education tradition, established in the state sector with a legacy of the colonial culture, quality, it would seem from the evidence, is tied to the input/output model in which excellent quality is an outcome of excellent staff and excellent students. Introducing a procedural and technical quality process requires understanding and resourcing of that process in the institutional context which the findings show is problematic.

6.3 Quality assurance in the institutional context

Within the institutions, the findings indicate that key stakeholders in the relationship are generous to each other in describing their experiences and understanding of the context and practice of quality assurance. The data may be influenced by the role of the researcher and a reluctance from participants to be critical of one another or of the quality process. One participant offered a critical comment on UWE's approach to quality assurance in Sri Lanka:

I think it's symptomatic of our immaturity as a TNE provider that we have a system here that produces a particular type of service for a particular need i.e. our undergraduates, primarily undergraduates here at UWE, that then tries – if we try and put something into that system that doesn't fit and this is a common problem, it doesn't matter whether we're talking about part-time students or degree apprenticeships or TNE, it's we struggle with activities that don't suit the dominant model. UK04 Senior Management/Leader

As one might expect, the Sri Lankan participants are much more aware and engaged with the discourse about TNE in the country while for the UK respondents the focus is very much on the requirements of their home institution and their relationship with their partner is highly instrumental with a focus on completion of the quality assurance cycle.

Views on the quality assurance process were generally in congruence as to its purpose. Work load and resources issues at all the institutions were perceived as the main factor behind issues of non-compliance with requirements. Things are getting done but getting done late. Additionally, for Sri Lanka quality assurance of TNE is seen as way of evidencing the quality and meet standards of TNE provision in the face of concern from the state sector.

Resource constraints in both Sri Lankan institutions investigated show that the quality assurance process is impacted by workload pressures and a reliance on part time ‘teach and go staff’ with little allegiance to the attempt to develop and embed the quality assurance process.

The way forward may therefore challenge the precepts of TNE as a profit-making exercise if, as the research findings argue, investment in the set up and operations of the TNE provision require a degree of resourcing, interaction, reciprocal visits and socialisation to deliver on quality assurance. Such an investment will be costly and is not happening in the case of NS. The established model at UWE tries to treat every TNE project as equivalent with associated expectations of what is 'reasonable' in terms of resource input.

I think much as if we had an endless budget I'd love to send all my administrators out to meet their administrators, but we need to be really clear what we hope to achieve from these visits and if there are any that it's time and money well spent and that we actually see something delivered as a result of that. UK02 Senior Professional Services

In NS the processes of assessment fall to the person teaching each module. Many of these are temporary staff on short term contracts. Continuity from semester to semester is poor and therefore understanding and support for the quality assurance is subject to that loss of continuity. One way of addressing that would be to reduce the reliance on ‘teach and go’ staff to genuine speciality expertise and shift the overall staffing balance towards more full-time staff. This is a critical resourcing issue.

In CSA, the management and leadership of the institution have grasped the organisational and staff development challenges of the quality assurance process and appear to be having some success. They still face the reluctance of their highly skilled practicing professionals who teach for them to fill in the forms. CSA however have appointed two senior academics as deputies to the Chief Executive who complete the paperwork while managing and overseeing the quality assurance process.

6.4 A proposed framework for quality assurance in transnational education

6.4.1 Development of the framework

The development of the framework came initially from the literature review from which the concept of relational capital arose. As defined in Chapter 3, relational capital is ‘value that is created and maintained by having, nurturing and managing good relationships in the totality of relations between a firm and its stakeholders (Still et al., 2013). In summary, the key features of the concept discussed in the literature, which lead to its centrality in the framework, come from:

- Institutions in inter-organisational relationships are inter-dependent and require inter-organisational certainties about their behaviour from each other (Cousins, 2002)
- Socialisation between individuals is a mechanism to achieve integration in supply chain management (Cousins and Mengue, 2006)
- Relational capital is the application of the concept of social capital to inter-organisational relationships (Still et al., 2013)
- The acquisition of social (and relational capital) requires deliberate investment of resources (Lin, 2001; Portes, 1998)
- Relationship management requires a particular skill set, including team based working and inter-personal communication (Cousins and Speckman, 2003)
- Relational capital comprises assets, knowledge, capabilities, and governance processes created through an organisation's relational resources with another organisation that cannot be generated by either organisation on its own (Dyer and Singh, 1998)
- Close interactions between different levels of personnel in a relationship develops trust which leads to shared understandings between partners (Liu, 2010)
- Research consortia with better relationships perform more successfully than those with lower levels of closeness and betweenness indicators (Cricelli and Greco (2013)
- Relational capital is developed over the duration of the relationship and requires time, effort and investment (Miocevic, 2016)
- Relational capital; is associated with less administrative types of governance (Miocevic, 2016)
- Relational bonding, through repeated exchanges, both formal and informal aims to overcome physical distance (Miocevic, 2016).

In the data collection there was a significant mention of the need to communicate and the importance of developing relationships as related in the previous chapter. This was expressed in the main by the Sri Lankan participants expressing a desire for reciprocal visits. Such was the consistency of this issue that the stage 2 interviews in the UK were reoriented to specifically ask about visits.

6.4.2 Resources, competences and competencies for effective performance of quality assurance in TNE

The following figure presents three factors raised from the findings to produce a model of the effective quality assurance in TNE. This model is equally relevant to both sending and receiving institutions and formed part of my thinking in developing the framework. It has value as a tool to discuss the issues of the relationship between resources and the competences and competencies required for effective quality assurance in TNE.

As the findings show, the critical requirement is of resources at both UWE and the partners. First the organisation needs to establish the competences it need to manage TNE and quality assurance and to assess whether the competences are in place. For instance this would cover the right balance of full and visiting staff, the competence of overseeing the quality assurance process (CSA) and to create a more balanced workload for the staff at NS to allow them to engage with quality assurance. NS delegate to module leaders while CSA centralise the process to different effects.

Resources are a critical requirement for employing staff as well as to finance the visits and technical infrastructure necessary to develop relational capital through socialisation over time. Such activities are not 'one-offs' at the start of a TNE project, not least because the study shows a high level of staff turnover and loss of knowledge when that occurs. They therefore cost. As the private sector TNE operates as a business, resources are dependent on student fees and other income generation. Using this model as an educational tool in the organisations would throw attention onto the business plan and the resources required to run TNE and its quality assurance.



Figure 6.1 Factor congruence for effective performance of quality assurance process in TNE

6.4.3 Competencies for effective quality assurance in TNE

The following figure (6.2) presents four areas of individual competencies represented in the lower right hand side box of Figure 6.1. These four areas of competencies are developed from the findings.

First, the competency of possessing the complicated technical knowledge regarding the regulations governing the provision, mainly the Academic Regulations and ensuring they are applied. In the findings this was explained as a key competency of the professional services staff and comments were made about the availability of this competency in the equivalent partner roles where the concept of a professional administrator is not well developed.

Second, communication competencies receive significant attention in the findings as fundamental to the success of TNE provision and quality assurance. While communication skills can be seen as a relationship skill, respondents single this area out and it can be argued to be a core human competence. Communication competencies are also multi-modal and cover face-to-face and electronic modes.

Third, relational competencies, drawing from the findings are those that relate to cross organisational relationships. The findings reference diplomacy, getting things done, empathy, patience, a certain style of working, collaborative problems solving, acknowledging and respecting the other opinion, and the ability to 'deliver the message in a nice way without

insulting the other party... will produce better results than abrupt and direct approach'. UK07 Senior Academic, Link Tutor

Fourth, the findings show an awareness of inter-cultural factors requiring competencies to include not making assumptions about the other person, getting to know them, cultural sensitivities and at least one person engagement with intercultural communication training.

As with Figure 6.1, Figure 6.2 can be used in an educational setting with staff involved in TNE and a way to develop staff.

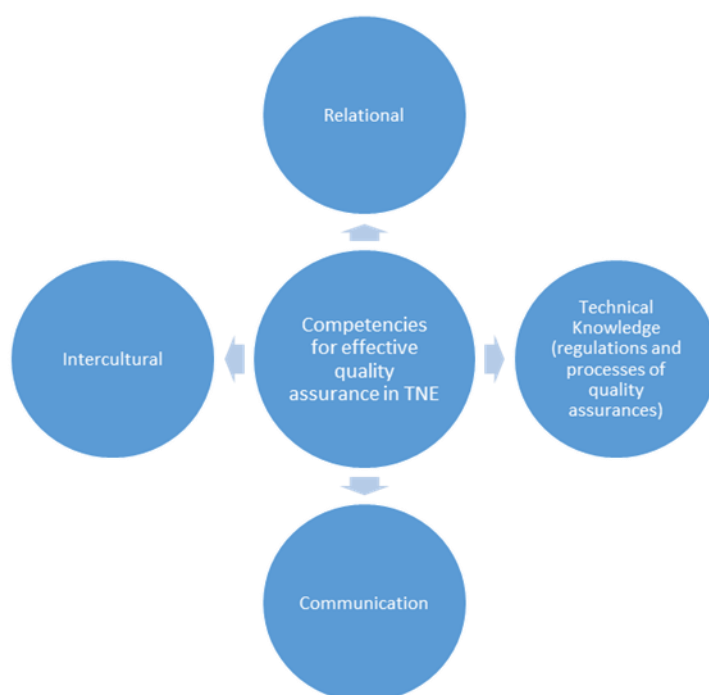


Figure 6.2 Competencies for effective quality assurance in TNE

For the purpose of the model the acquisition mode of critical competencies of the individuals, whether as natural traits or as taught skills or competencies developed experientially, are not significant. The requirement is that the competencies are present in the project. They could be present in each individual or distributed across competences located in specific roles and job titles. The proposed value of this model is to enable organisations to discuss the presence of competencies and to address any needs through the appointment or development of staff.

Together the two models enable an organisation to consider the appropriate number of staff and the balance between full and 'teach and go staff' (resources), the roles into which they are deployed (competences) and their individual competencies which might be natural or acquired, and will need development especially in the critical areas of relational and intercultural competencies.

6.4.4 Quality assurance in TNE: a relational and competency framework

The results of the data collection resulted in a minor amendment to the framework in terms of the introduction of an 'interaction' component to reflect the considerable value developed remotely through email, telephony, messaging services and video-conferencing which the findings offer a one way of addressing the distances involved in TNE.

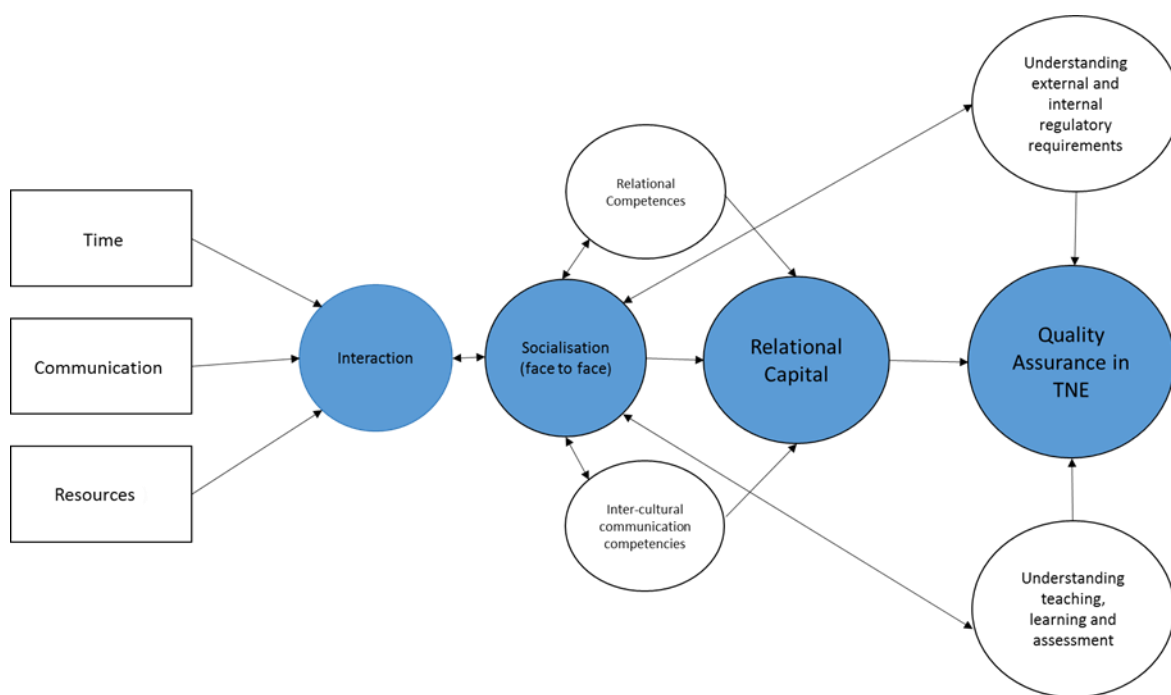


Figure 6.3 Quality assurance in transnational education: a relational and competency framework

Working from right to left in the framework the findings support the requirement for all staff to understand the predominant approach to teaching, learning and assessment. The findings present some evidence that the younger staff at NS are enthusiastic to learn and see that learning as being personally valuable as well as having positive effects on the students learning. For CSA it would seem that the understanding is there.

Understanding the external and internal regulatory requirements is a key issue. The findings present evidence that this understanding at NS is not there and staff do what they do because they are told to.

The key components of the model are relational capital and its creation through socialisation. The data finds strong evidence regarding the importance of relationships to the conduct of quality assurance and to the perception that socialisation through visits contributes not just to socialisation but to the understanding of the regulatory requirements and teaching, learning and assessment.

The requirement of organisational competences and individual competencies has been analysed in the findings. The underpinning of interaction is the time, resources and communication infrastructure and activities required to enable it.

6.4.5 Application of the framework

The purpose of the framework is to develop effective quality assurance in TNE through the people engaged in that work. The use of the framework is proposed as a tool to understanding and to generate conversation about existing and novel ways to build relational capital however the key role of face-to-face socialisation remains.

Keay, et al. (2014) recommend the building of communities of practice, where the focus is less on the imposition of one model into another context, than on developing the quality of the relationship between partners, required to enhance understanding, develop competencies, practice and improve quality. This cannot be achieved however without supporting that understanding through the development of both competences and competencies otherwise quality assurance runs the risk of being a box ticking exercise designed to reach compliance thresholds, to avoid being chased for missing documentation, a time wasting and bureaucratic practice as evidenced by the behaviour of the teach and go staff.

The evidence for the importance of relational capital development is contained in the evidence about working relationships, the importance of visits and face-to face meetings and communication. This supports the earlier work of Heffernan and Poole (2005, 2004) which identified that shared values, development of trust and mutual respect provide the basis for positive transnational education relationships. Good practice in TNE identifies 'relationship management' as a necessary factor for the development of successful TNE.

The working relationships between the partner institutions are critical. As the findings have evidenced, successful partnership working requires both competences and competencies.

A question raised by application of the framework might be 'have we got the right competences in place to successfully deliver TNE?'. An appropriate competence would be the partnership lead role with its emphasis on partnership strategy and direction. The link tutor might be a job role that contains a range of competencies regarding relationship building, problems solving and staff support and development. It is however a role at UWE that is allocated the equivalent of one half day a week.

A competence that might be an area of deficit, based on the research findings, is in training and staff development in TNE operation as training and development would appear to be an activity of unmet demand in both the providers and host.

Such a role in training and development could also focus on developing the competencies required for the key roles of Partnership Lead, Link tutor and Operations Manager at the providing institution as well as the for the module leaders who moderate assessments in the quality assurance process. The similar roles at the host organisation would also be the people filling the key competences roles. Training and development could seek to disrupt the parent/child dependencies of the current relationship, building confidence in the existing

competencies of individuals and develop competencies to make the institution sustainable in the management of quality assurance and even contribute competencies that enable culturally contextualised processes of quality assurance. Such an approach might have the potential to genuinely build capacity in the host country higher education system.

6.5 Transnational education and capacity building

Naidoo (2007, 2010) discusses how the strengthening of HE as a vital engine of economic success faces a lack of resources and expertise in developing countries. She is concerned about the ‘rush by foreign universities and corporate entities to offer academic programmes in developing countries’ (Naidoo, 2007, p. 6). She seeks to develop a research agenda that may lead to capacity building, assuring the quality and standard of such provision, and comparability between state and private sector (Naidoo, 2010). Naidoo recognises that the trends that encourage the provision of higher education through foreign providers have the potential to bring benefits, but also dangers, by linking such provision to the hegemonic discourse of the knowledge economy in which developing countries have unequal power (Naidoo, 2010).

TNE might be seen as a transitional phenomenon as, over time, local partner institutions develop their own academic programmes and decrease their reliance on foreign universities (Ziguras, 2008). Both the literature review and the data collection presented the advantage of addressing the ‘education deficit’ identified by UNESCO (2005). TNE provision does provide relatively affordable access to higher education and meet a demand in the market place. It provides employment and, in requiring the operation of the sending institution’s quality assurance framework, it can transfer knowledge about different pedagogic approaches, mechanisms for student engagement, innovative assessment tools, and robust quality assurance processes to protect the interests of the students.

Martin (2016) examines the role of quality assurance in addressing corruption and malpractice in higher education which she reports is a concern in many higher education systems. A range of governance issues are within the remit of quality assurance processes and include preventative measures such as academic appeals and complaints processes, fair recruitment, selection and admissions processes for students, academic integrity guidance and procedures and the provision of accurate and transparent information. TNE can assist in the development of capacity building in all these areas. To achieve this requires conscious decision making and resource allocation by the providing institution. Such approaches can be encouraged through the development of good practice guidelines for TNE which national quality assurance agencies like the QAA could develop.

6.7 Summary of Discussion

The findings are immensely rich with insight into TNE and quality assurance in this case. The data is wide ranging and is not evidently marked by caution or concerns over confidentiality by the participants.

The findings evidence a deficit between the demands for socialisation and learning through visits and the experiences available to staff, especially the Sri Lankan staff. Only one of the NS staff and two of the CSA staff has ever visited UWE.

A proposed relational and competency framework for quality assurance in transnational education has been presented that could be applied to take into account the individual circumstances facing any TNE provision, provider or host institution.

The findings of this research is that organisations developing TNE need to focus on relationship building as an essential requirement for successful TNE and recognise that such practice is expensive. Such activities will include staffing requirement for a minimum number of full time competences required, the continuity and staff development issues of ‘teach and go staff’, relationship building through communication, reciprocal visits and socialisation processes, the development of communities of practice in teaching learning and assessment, and staff training and development in areas of relationship competencies and intercultural competencies.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter will summarise the discussion in the context of the research question and the original aim as outlined in Chapter 1. It will also review the implications of the research for theory, the limitations of the research, the potential implications of the findings on policy and practice in quality research in TNE and opportunities for further research.

7.2 Quality assurance in transnational education

The case study of quality assurance in TNE between UWE and two host institutions in Sri Lanka, Northshore College of Business and Technology and City School of Architecture, has been driven by a research question prompting an exploration of the perceptions and understanding of the people engaged in TNE and its quality assurance. Literature describing the scale and scope of TNE, and the issues within it, have established that TNE is an example of practical strategising by institutions (Marginson and van der Wende, 2007) and one that is driven by market demand and commercial interests (McBurnie and Ziguras, 2007)). The growth and development of TNE has been discussed together with its wider context of economic benefits to both provider and receiver economies.

Martin (2016) argues that corruption and malpractices have become an increasingly important concern in higher education policy-making. HE plays a crucial role in the distribution of life chances and privileged access to the labour market. Quality assurance systems, wherein the HEIs are the main actors, are the main way for the prevention and identification of risks of corruption and malpractices (Martin, 2016). Institutional practices in quality assurance are thus an essential component of the provision, to prevent corruption, protect students and maintain the reputation of the institutions. The emphasis of the framework presented in this study, the relationships and understandings of the individuals engaged in TNE, provides a tool to develop the shared understanding which can contribute to the safeguarding of the provision from fraud and corruption.

In order to develop a theoretical underpinning for quality assurance in TNE, three areas of theoretical discourse have been considered: the literature on quality assurance; literature on supply chain quality management and the concept of relational capital; and the literature on intercultural communication and competency. The three bodies of literature are appropriate for understanding an issue that is, by definition, both inter-organisational and intercultural and are brought together to propose a potential framework for examining quality assurance in TNE.

The research has made contributions in advancing the scholarly discussion on quality assurance in TNE in three areas

First, is the development of relational capital as a key concept for quality assurance in TNE. TNE is by definition inter-organisational and therefore how inter-organisational relationships develop, the decisions and priorities towards the relationship are vital. This concept of relational capital is at the heart of the proposed relational and competency conceptual

framework developed by the study as way to understand the dynamics of quality assurance in institutions engaged in TNE.

Second, the results also indicate the need for a deeper understanding of socialisation in the creation of relational capital. Relational capital is built over time through socialisation and maintained through communication, both formal and informal, and builds trust and transparency. It also helps develop a shared understandings of meanings and, in the context of quality assurance, a shared quality culture in which people share a common understanding of the process. Such a development can allow an approach to quality assurance which moves away from a bureaucratic process of control in quality assurance, where the emphasis is on completing the paperwork without necessarily understanding why they are doing so, to a normative process of control where staff implement quality assurance without the necessity of 'being chased' because they share an understanding of why they are doing what they are doing.

Third, the research draws attention to organisational competences and individual competencies required to conduct quality assurance in TNE. The distinction between 'competence' as an organisational requirement to fulfil, and 'competencies' as the skill set of the individual(s) filling the roles designed to meet the competence requirement is made following Boyatzis (1982) and applied to the conceptual framework. This distinction provides a way for an organisation to approach the management of quality assurance, the design of roles, and the development and training of staff. In terms of the competencies required for the conduct of quality assurance in TNE the study draws attention to relational competencies and to inter-cultural communication competencies through the inter-organisational and inter-cultural nature of TNE. In staff development there is an opportunity for collaboratively designed professional development and communities of practice in TNE both for each project and at the provider across all TNE projects at the provider institutional level.

7.3 Implications for policy and practice

The issue of socialisation and the building of relational capital is a challenging one for quality assurance in TNE because of the distance and expense of visiting in person. Face-to-face socialisation is, however, vital to the creation of relational capital, especially as systems and procedures are established.

To avoid a one-way pattern of visits, and the reinforcement of the power relationship in TNE, visits should not be confined to the senior management of the organisations, and they should be reciprocal. The inter-organisational relationship in TNE does hold the providing institution in a position of power over the host institution in terms of the continuing agreement and its commercial value to both parties. It is nevertheless possible for the individuals involved to work collaboratively within those relations

At the individual staff member level, it is possible to develop relationships that are mutually respectful and support capacity building in the partner institution through its staff and their learning. Working relationships are key. UK staff inculcated in UK quality assurance can assume meaning about language used and processes conducted that is not present in their TNE institutions and interaction, socialisation, communication and face to face meetings are a way of creating shared meaning. Visits should therefore also not be confined to the

‘policing’ of compliance to quality assurance but encompass staff and student induction and staff development.

In addition to face-to-face socialisation it is also important for both institutions to share a technology infrastructure for communication. This needs to encompass email and voice mail as well as both one-to-one video and group video conferencing.

The competences and competencies of quality assurance in TNE should also be examined to ensure that the relationship has the right roles in place to maintain and develop the relationship and that these roles are resourced to enable the post holder to fulfil the competence required. There are generic competences required in areas of leadership, co-ordination, communication. How these are configured in any one organisation will be up to that organisation. In this case the key competences were held in the following roles of strategic leadership, partnership lead, link tutor, programme leader, moderator and module leader at both UWE and the partners. The data and findings from this study can contribute to a discussion that is current within the University as a whole regarding the role of the link tutor and their training and support.

The implications for the study are concerned with the recognition that TNE is a complex and potentially rewarding activity but, while it is driven solely by commercial imperatives, it will put at risk the very nature of what makes it a currently valuable educational export.

7.4 Limitations of the study

The study is of a single case of TNE between UWE and two Sri Lankan institutions. A single case study can have value in generating rich insights into a social phenomenon like quality assurance in an organisational setting (Bryman, 2016, Cresswell, 2013). The choice of UWE and its two partner institutions as a case study, from which to draw conclusions about quality assurance in TNE, could be seen as weakness in itself, providing as it does a ‘snapshot’ of an organisation in time (Bryman, 2016, Cresswell, 2013). A longitudinal study over time might offer some insights into how perceptions of quality assurance may change and what variables might bring about such changes. This also prompts a question of whether the findings based on this case, bounding three institutions, are generalisable to a wider population in TNE. The claims made for the research are with regard to the potential value of a framework to understand the process of quality assurance in TNE. The value of that framework is subject to opportunities for further research and discussion.

The research method of the interview as the sole method of data collection is appropriate when the purpose of the research is the explorations of understanding and meaning (Roulston and Choi, 2018), however other methods, such as observation, may have provided further data if conducted during staff training and induction or during the process of quality assurance itself. Such a method would be subject to the same issue of the impact of the researcher in the research and would be very expensive to conduct in Sri Lanka and was not considered feasible for this study for that reason.

The study does not include an analysis of documents, both official and informal, recording previous events, visits by staff, issues dealt with and how there were resolved, communication events and methods, and records of meetings and conversations held during visits. The data was not available to construct such an account.

The validity of qualitative research can be subject to question. In this study, care was taken to align the research question with the methodological approach and to articulate that alignment. The process of data collection, interpretation and the validity of the research is addressed through reflexivity (Alvesson, 2010), in the sense of being as conscious of the biases, values and experiences that I bring to the research as possible, as well as in thinking about the interpretation of the data, something I have strived to achieve.

Inclusive research is an umbrella terms encompassing participatory and emancipatory philosophies where people who are the focus of the research are involved in its design and conduct (Edwards and Brannelly, 2017). A methodological approach that more fully involved the participants, and allowed them to discuss and comment on the conceptual model and its development, may have raised further issues and refinements of the model. Such an approach was constrained by distance and time. A weakness of the study is that the model has not been presented to the participants for their comments.

I would have liked to have become more familiar with Nvivo. The data is indeed rich and may be capable of generating further insights than I have been able to achieve. An interesting area to develop would have been further analysis looking at perceptions of quality and the educational experience and role of the person holding the view.

In terms of the literature explored, the study makes constrained use of critical management theory with regard to power relations in organisations and the concept of quality assurance as a configuration of control (Jermier, 1998). The literature enabled an understanding for the research that power exists in organisations, in management practice and by extension in TNE, despite the couching of TNE in the language of partnership (Djerasimovic, 2014). Further use of this literature might have developed both the methodology and the research question, however that issue is as much an opportunity for further research as well as a limitation of this study.

7.5 Further research

This study has provided insights into the understanding and perceptions of quality assurance in TNE in one case. It has developed three linked conceptual models which can be investigated, critiqued, elaborated or found wanting, through further research into quality assurance in other cases of TNE.

The research identified the importance of the national context for perceptions of quality assurance in TNE. Further research examining the understanding and perceptions of quality assurance in different types of institution for instance state/private, could provide insights into the dynamics of change in the national higher education context and implications for how quality assurance is conducted.

Further variables that might provide interesting research questions will be those that relate to the regulatory regime and its maturity in the receiving country. Further research might examine whether there are differences in perceptions of quality in a country hosting TNE that has a well-developed local quality assurance system, such as Malaysia, compared with Sri Lanka where the quality assurance system is confined to the state sector. The maturity of the institutions themselves in terms of their experience of TNE, and the practices of social exchange and relationship building they engage with, may also be an important variable in for understanding how quality assurance is understood and conducted. Such research could

also help in the development of good practice guides aimed at improving the quality assurance process.

Further research could explore the value of the models in exploring capacity building in higher education through the impact of quality assurance processes that achieve purposes beyond the imposition of one model into another context and enable process of improvement in quality.

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Appendix A Participant Consent Form



University of the
West of England

Northshore College of Business and
Technology

University of Bath

Research Project "Quality Assurance in Transnational Education"

Consent Form for Interview

for Participant _____ (insert unique identifier)

	Please initial
1. I agree to be interviewed for the above project.	
2. I confirm that I have read and understand the Participant Information Sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that, without giving any reason, I may withdraw consent at any time up to publication of the research, in which case the information I provided in the interview will be destroyed and not used in the research project.	
4. I agree to my interview being audio-recorded and then transcribed. I understand that only the researcher named below will have access to the audio-record and the transcribed interview.	
5. I understand that if I lose the capacity to consent during the study, then I will be withdrawn from the study. Identifiable data already collected with my consent will be retained and used in the study. No further data will be collected or any other research procedures carried out on or in relation to myself.	
6. I understand that all identifiable data, interview audio records and interview transcriptions will be destroyed within 3 years after the study has ended.	

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Name of Researcher

Date

Signature

1 copy for participant; 1 copy for researcher

Appendix B Participant Information Sheet



Northshore College of Business and
Technology City School of Architecture
University of Bath

Research Project “Quality Assurance in Transnational Education”

Participant Information Sheet

for Participant _____ (insert unique identifier)

Who is carrying out the project?

My name is Morris Williams and I work as the Director, International Partnerships at UWE. I am also completing a doctorate programme at the University of Bath in Higher Education Management.

As part of this programme I am conducting a study on quality management in transnational education such as the partnership you are involved in at Northshore College and City School of Architecture.

What is the purpose of the project?

The purpose of the research is to investigate how quality insurance in transnational education is conducted and what the people involved in the process think about it. The intention is to better understand the quality assurance process and how it is perceived. There is no implication that the quality assurance process is not currently working well.

Why have I been asked to take part?

We wish to interview a small number of selected staff to better understand the quality assurance process for the UWE programmes running at Northshore College and City School of Architecture. We would very much value your participation in such an interview.

What will happen if I take part?

If you agree to take part in the project, you will be asked to talk to Morris Williams, preferably in a face-to-face interview. Before this conversation, you will be asked to sign a consent form saying that you agree to take part in the project. With your consent, the interview will be audio-recorded.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All interview informants will be allocated a unique identifier (as above). Personal information will be stored separately to the information you have provided in the interview. We will anonymise you as an individual and any other people you talk about in the interview (and may give you a pseudonym). Procedures for data security and storage will be in line with UWE policies and procedures. Your personal data and the information provided during the interview will be stored on password-protected computers.

Do I have to take part?

No. Your participation is entirely voluntary. If you do decide to take part in the project, you will still be able to withdraw from it any time, without giving any reason. In this case, any information you have given us will be destroyed. To withdraw from the project, all you need to do is contact Morris Williams (details below) quoting your unique identifier above. However, your views are very valuable for this project, so we hope that you will consent to take part.

What will happen to the findings from the project?

The findings will be presented as a thesis for the award of Doctor of Business Administration, Higher Education Management at the University of Bath and may also be presented at one or more conferences and detailed in an article in an academic publication. No named individual will be identified in any publications or presentations, all of which will be publicly available.

A general summary of my research findings focusing on developing good practice in quality assurance in transnational education will be sent to all participants in the study.

Copies of any publications can be obtained from Morris Williams (contact details below).

Who has reviewed the project?

This project has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Environment and Technology, UWE, and by School of Management of the University of Bath and the University of Bath Ethics Committee. It has also been granted permission from Northshore College and City School of Architecture.

Making a complaint

If you take part and are unhappy with any aspect of this project, you can email or write to: the Secretary, Faculty Research Ethics Committee, Faculty of Environment and Technology, University of the West of England, Bristol BS16 1QY; Email: researchethics@uwe.ac.uk; Tel: 0117 32 81170, from Sri Lanka +44-117-32-81170. Please indicate the nature of your complaint.

Researcher contact details

If you require more information about the project, please contact:

- Morris Williams, Director International Partnerships, Faculty of Environment and Technology, Frenchay Campus, University of the West of England, Bristol BS16 1QY. Tel 0117 3282037, from Sri Lanka +44-117-32-8-3037 Email: morris.williams@uwe.ac.uk.

Appendix C Stage 1 Interviews

Interview Questions

1. Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. For the purpose of anonymity you have the unique identifier 01 etc.
2. Are you comfortable with participating in the research?
3. Collection of signed consent form.
4. Purpose of research repeated from participant information form. Confidentiality and anonymity of interview reiterated.
5. Can you tell me about your own experience of higher education and your current job title?
6. In the wider context of higher education what do you think is meant by quality?
7. In that context there is often a connection between quality and standards. What do you think is meant by standards in this context?
8. Transnational education (TNE) or collaborative provision allows the delivery of a UK degree programme at a provider college such as Northshore/CSA. What do you think the benefits are of TNE?
9. Are there any risks or challenges in TNE in your opinion?
10. From your experience do you think there are any differences in perceptions of quality and standards between Sri Lanka and the UK?
11. You may be aware that quality and standards in the UK are overseen by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) who produce guidance about what UK universities need to do to assure quality and standards. How familiar are you with the QAA quality code?
12. The Quality Code states that a UK university cannot delegate responsibility for the quality and standards of its awards to the partner. UWE has designed the Quality Management and Assessment Framework (QMEF) to meet the QAA's expectations as to how we assure quality. How familiar are you with QMEF? How well do you think it works?
13. Can you tell me about your role in the quality assurance of the UWE programmes running in/with Sri Lanka/TNE/UWE.
14. How do you think your role contributes to the overall quality and standards of the programmes running in Sri Lanka?
15. How much contact do you have with staff at the partner? Would you like more or less communication with them?
16. In terms of your role, what parts of the collaboration do you think work well and what might be improved?

17. However effective are the communication channels for the collaborative provision.
18. To what extent do you think that values and goals about quality and standards are shared between UWE and Sri Lankan partners?
19. To what extent do you feel the collaboration is a partnership of equals?
20. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Many thanks – offer availability of transcript.

Morris Williams, 26-08-15

Appendix D Stage 2 Interview Questions

Interview Questions

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. For the purpose of anonymity you have the unique identifier 01 etc.

1. Are you comfortable with participating in the research?
 2. Collection of signed consent form.
 3. Purpose of research repeated from participant information form. Confidentiality and anonymity of interview reiterated.
 4. Any questions?
-

5. Can you tell me about your own experience of higher education and your current job title.
6. Can you tell me about your role in the quality assurance of the UWE programmes running in Sri Lanka.
7. In terms of your role, what parts of the collaboration do you think work well and what might be improved?
8. From your experience, do you think there are any differences in perceptions of quality and standards between Sri Lanka and the UK?
9. To what extent do you think that values and goals about quality and standards are shared between UWE and Sri Lankan partners?
10. To what extent do you feel the collaboration is a partnership of equals?
11. What do you think are the most important factors for the quality of the collaborative provision?
12. How much contact do you have with staff at the partner? Would you like more or less contact with them or are current levels about right?
13. How do you communicate with them?
14. How effective do you think the communication channels for the collaborative provision are?
15. Are there any “inter-cultural” communication issues in working with the partner? Cue – batch.
16. Have you ever visited the partner?
17. If yes – how frequently and what was the purpose?
18. If no – do you think a visit would benefit the partnership working – if so how?
19. Do you think the partner would benefit from a visit to UWE? If so how?

20. Are there particular inter-personal skills that you think help with successful collaborative provision? What are they?
21. What do you think people need to be good at when working with partners?
22. How would you describe the relationship with the staff at the partner?
23. Do you feel the relationship with the partner has developed over time? If so, how and why?
24. Have you had any training or staff development about working in collaborative provision?
25. If yes – what sort?
26. Would you like training or staff development about working in collaborative provision?
27. If so what sort?
28. Do you think staff at our partner could benefit from staff training and development?
29. If so – in what areas?
30. What sort of activities in your view make for successful partnership?
31. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Many thanks – offer availability of transcript.

END

Appendix E Example of transcript

CONFIDENTIAL

Date: 21 October 2015

Interviewer: Morris Williams

Respondent: Senior Academic (Programme Leader) SL09

INT: Ok so thank you for agreeing to this interview, shall I explain, the participant information explains but I'm looking at really what we do here is called transnational education we call it collaborative provision but a lot of universities do it and they effectively run their own programmes through another college. I'm interested in is the quality assurance part and what I'm interested in is how it works and how we might improve it but this interview is not a test and it doesn't imply any problems or difficulties ok, I just want to know what you think about the process so I'm going to basically ask you some quite open general questions and you are obviously just gonna give me your views wherever possible and the same questions are asked to everybody but if there's an interesting comment that you make I might ask you to elaborate a bit further on it.

So I'm gonna start by just asking you about your own higher education experience.

RES: Ok, the thing is I pursued my undergraduate at the University of Kelaniya – it is a Sri Lankan university, so a four year DP in computer science. After completing that I finished my Master's degree in computer science; it is at the Sri Lankan University; the University of Colombo, The School of Computing - that is the school they put at university. After completing that then I stayed in industry. Different phases; I mean system development, [s.l. recruitment 0:02:03.8 inaudible] and that sort of thing and then after I joined with this university.

INT: Ok, so your role here, could you just explain what your role is?

RES: Ok I am programme leader for Software Engineering and also I'm working as a senior lecturer. Basically as a senior lecturer I help teaching about [0:02:29.3 inaudible] 40 credit some time with that first week it is about 12 hours teaching.

INT: 12 hours teaching?

RES: Yeah sometimes, sometimes it's 9 - it depends on the semester also - and basically as module leader I help set exam papers and also I deliver that module and also prepare all this documentations, module reports and all these things. As a programme lead I have to schedule timetables and sort out administration work and also I have to work collaboratively with my lecturers and also I do often communicate with our link tutor - so she's very helpful. Any time we drop her ... when I drop her an e-mail she may be get back to me within one hour - she's that responsive – and because of that actually here [inaudible 0:03:25.1 *things are very easy*] in software engineering because she is very responsive even with night we are communicating sometimes she wakes up she is also [inaudible 0:03:32.5] busy most of the time and I'm also like that because we are IT people so normally we aim to do that also erm basically this side of things and also sometimes I also take part of the recruitment also I mean when we are looking for a lecturer for software engineering then I also play an active role, basically these are the main activities that I do.

- INT: Thank you, so the first question I'm going to ask is, is in terms of higher education, what do you think is meant by the word quality, what do you think quality means in higher education?
- RES: Ok the thing is we help maintain the quality of our teaching and also may be I believe there is some research component also. Also if it is things like affiliations or sometimes if it is a state university we don't tell that sort of body who are monitoring that university, but a place like this we help to maintain standards of the parent university, the standard set by parent university normally due to the partnership they meet us to [inaudible 0:04:48.3 *work*] and also different ways they monitor us for example when we set exam paper we moderate here and also we upload it to partnership university also and there are a number of points where we check this exam paper so in that way at the end we deliver some quality paper and we are responsible for delivering quality lectures because no-one [inaudible 0:05:15.0i *looking at our*] (a) lecture in the classroom and so on so I think basically, ok, teach according to the syllabus and also set exam papers and assessment according to the learning outcomes I think this all about the quality so and also we help partnership like this meeting parent university expectation and also meeting expectations of our student that is the quality.
- INT: Thank you, so amongst that answer, you made reference to our standards. Usually people refer to quality and standards in the same sentence really and quality, as you say, is about the quality of the teaching and the syllabus and the assessment and meeting the learning outcomes. In what way do you think standards apply or are standards different from quality or in what way, I mean how would you describe standards in higher education?
- RES: Ok thing is you mean how we maintain it or?
- INT: Or what does standards mean?
- RES: Ok so it is like ok so if you think about an exam paper there's a certain level that we have say, for example, ok maybe look at the marks, we have to ... when we look at the statistic it reflect [inaudible 0:06:47.3 *whether it is up to that*] level so they maintain that level I mean when it is ok when we think about lecture material even so there we help keep a standard that mean mmm it should reflect [0:07:02.7 *it is done by some OK*] academic and also it is it should go with the syllabus also and also we have maintained the quality I mean. And also ok and also the learning environment; when it come to the learning environment this [0:07:24.6 inaudible *materials and things?*] we can think about the standard very clearly so sometimes it is complicating it maybe depend on the lecturer also. But when we think about the environment, okay, that learning environment even the facilities that we offer for students maybe lecture room facilities and also maybe it can be laboratory facilities when it comes to electronic labs and so-on we know what is [0:07:52.5 *is necessary to have*] and equipment these things should be up with that level so and also in when it comes to computing may be most the time the equipment that we use and also providing the proper computer lab and these facilities and also it is about the standard and also when it comes to [0:08:17.7 *civil engineering*] they have the topic [0:08:18.1 *a lot of big pavements?*] so normally there's a different ways of [0:08:21.1 *doing it*] actually but providing [0:08:24.0 *they meet the curriculum need*] and so-on - that is also standard and with all this we can fulfil the standard.
- INT: Right, that's fine, yeah, and in particular trying to keep the standard that you would have in the UK with the standard in Sri Lanka so they both, the students reach the same level, ok so what we do here is deliver our degree here and it's called transnational education, there are lots of universities Australian and British universities in Sri Lanka, what do you think the benefits of transnational education are to whoever you think about; colleges or parents or students, what are the benefits of what we do here?
- RES: Ok the thing is one main thing before we don't have these sort of opportunities in Sri Lanka it is all about state universities but places that we have is very limited so maybe per year it is about I understand I think 50,000 it is like that but we have really good student who passed A Level [0:09:36.2 *government only offer*] university & transport to the top score student

but it doesn't mean these students are not good. So because of that it creates some opportunity, there are some parents they can afford the local degree if it is available; I think in the past we didn't have that sort of option in Sri Lanka and also giving the [0:10:02.5 *awarding*] status to the institute is very hard in Sri Lanka also because the rules are very tough and also there are some places [0:10:12.2] so, for example, maybe even state universities students also may be getting all this thing, maybe when the governments try to implement that sort of thing but Sri Lankan institute can offer degree with the collaboration with the foreign [0:10:28.4 *affiliation*]. Then that would actually make that process feasible so without depending on our [0:10:36.1 *University Grants*] Commission, so because they can't stop that maybe and also before we have this model most of student used to go abroad and study the parent who can afford they send their student abroad actually that cost us huge money for the country but when we have this model they can keep their student in the country and they can send them and also not only that normally parents like their kids around them also and if they send abroad and they have to take that risk also but here we don't have that risk also, that is also a kind of opportunity there because kids can stay with the parent and also at the same time they can take the high quality degree I can't say any institute in Sri Lanka maintain the same quality because sometime they are thinking too much about the profit but I don't think a place like this they are not much focusing on the profit because there's the investor is pumping money into the institution and so on and because of that we can care of it but ...

And that was the worst part actually because some time parent university can be also income [0:11:51.4 *focused*] there can be opportunity for them, not locals, because of sometime there are some places at least for them it is only some ok benefit ok some profit making place when everything in that actually is bad so it is a bad side of it but anyway it has create many opportunities for Sri Lankans and also for the affiliations and also and I studied in state university now I am working here as a lecturer that meaning also it has created some opportunity for Sri Lanka.

INT: So what you described was firstly for the students who can't get into the state universities there's now an alternative to travelling abroad you suggested that parents would like that not just because they're saving money but because their children are close by and living at home with them which they prefer and then you've said it has an economic impact because that money isn't leaving the country it's staying inside the country and that economic benefit includes employing new members of staff in these private colleges and giving those new members of staff experience of working in a UK educational setting so that helps them develop is that what you think?

RES: Yes definitely.

INT: Ok, why do you think UWE does it, why do you think we have these arrangements?

RES: Ok, one thing it can be you know like visibility in different places in the world because anyway promoted so it [0:13:37.6 *gives us an*] okay recognition I feel so they can build it also and also one way is profit also that can be one way, they can expand the student base and these three things.

INT: Well yes and hopefully we will sometimes do student exchange and staff exchange. So what about risks or challenges or problems or difficulties around transnational education?

RES: Ok one thing it can be maintaining the quality because it is a remote university and also we can't compare our [s.l. purposes 0:14:41.2] with UWE actually so with the [0:14:43.0 *way*] we have seen all these things. So for example we don't have much support in all these things in that they ... ok there are some limits so he can't do that sort investment in Sri Lanka available at UWE and maintaining quality can be difficult because we have process maybe even here sometime we running with limited staff and because initially we can't have a lot of lecturers because it is not practical with the cost and all these things. And quality-wise there

can be issues and also resource-wise even we can't use same experience perfectly same experience we can't do that here that is not feasible what I feel otherwise it would be very much investment. And implementing that quality there can be risk and also initially ... initial stages ok how business go, that can be also risk because whether we get enough number of students and maybe there can be better ... maybe invest some money; whether we will have some ... the [0:15:49.2 *return*] that we expect; there can be risks also there.

And also, okay, there can be risks with the staff also because okay something it is true – not true here – but when I'm working to state universities so I have recognition outside the work – it is kind of prestige - because people know when I say University of [0:16:11.3 *Moratuwa*] people know it but when I say Northshore, ok people don't know it. So because of it there can be people discouraged – even qualified people - discouraged to come.

INT: To work here?

RES: It's like even though the environment is good and so-on, because of that finding that good lecturers can also be difficult.

INT: So it's not just students who don't know Northshore and think it's, it's an uncertain place?

RES: Yes, the thing is, for example, when you say [0:16:38.6] university it is different, right, I mean that they can [0:16:42.6] here also there because people used to think that [0:16:46.2 *government*] universities are better even though there are some issues but people that is the general thinking actually so because of that I mean before selecting some place to work people think about this thing also so in the initial stage they think about that also and also just think about going to different place in that case ok if I work well [0:17:07.8] place I get that advantage so because of that that's a risk and also ok student numbers we have that risk and also with lecturers, finding lecturers that can be the people and also parent university, maintaining the expected quality can be difficult because maybe parent university process has a good process but even then to implement it we need to have certain [0:17:39.9 *resources here*] also.

INT: So if we think about it for a minute and you were talking about the quality and the risk here is that because of the resources to implement the process or do you think there are different perceptions about what quality is between Sri Lanka and the UK? What is it, do you think?

RES: Ok there can be differences in that field also but I think ok when there's a process we need to facilitate also to maintain that process for example. It is true sometimes we have really good processes but thing is it is not something to do with ok administration it's not like that because behind the initial stage now, when some places start they can't ok 'help me start' and so-on because they have to think about cost also. I mean with all these things there can be risk; I'm not telling there's a risk in Northshore - it's not like that - I mean any place it can be there because initial stage they [0:19:02.6 *have difficulty*] for example even Northshore when you are starting we have a very limited number of staff - even initial stage we use two marketing [0:19:12.2 *people*] - so it is like that. Now only we have marketing team they look after that. So earlier actually we are doing marketing and also we are setting all this curriculum, we are teaching and it is like that so we [0:19:26.7 *have very limited resource*] also in the process we held documentation work and so not sure exactly ok without that they have that ... ok, it can be risk there.

INT: Ok so let's look at that process so you're familiar with that process, you described your role as looking after, writing exams, marking exams, communicating with the UWE moderators, how do you think that's going?

RES: Ok this going very well I think it is very good process also, ok, there for example when we set out exam paper other colleague check that so we do it very seriously. And also from their side, *Rong* ok, [0:20:12.7 *link tutor will read it*] and also not only that it will not stop there –

even the external moderator will look at it. Actually I think that is about the quality so but when we think about state university – it won't happen. So even the exam [0:20:28.6 *has lots of*] issues, for students actually so because of that here it happened very rarely because it is checked in a number of places but because of that I think the process is really good.

And also when we think about the [0:20:42.4 *delivery*] so we have write this module report and also programme report so it is about ok we are trying to maintain our own qualities for this year we write about the issues that we face and also what other observation and also what are the new things that we need and also we provide what we do next time to fix this thing and so then, again, we help write [0:21:06.1 *same module report*] for this particular module, then we have think about what we thought last time and then it is kind of self-evaluation – that we have done what is expected and so-on. And that is also really good and also we have meetings, it is very open, we can discuss any issue and also not only that when we mark the papers and when we submit we always get comments and we do double marking also. Because of that ok the lecturer can't take any sort of [0:21:36.1 *privilege*] from a student - there are some cases in state universities but here that can never happen. So I would check that and also from the other side and also going through that they also these marks I've checked and also not only that some external person commenting on that. And then we know whatever we marked is checked by [0:21:57.9 *our lead and*] also the link tutor and also the external examiner. Because of that we try our best to maintain our quality of marking also because of that I think mainly ok the process is really good so I can't think about any issue - the only thing is the workload so ... when initially we got started it was a huge workload; huge ... not [0:22:17.9 *dependent on*] processes really.

INT: Ok so you mentioned Rong who is the link tutor, how much contact do you have with Ron, do you have contact with anybody else at UWE?

RES: Ok, [pauses] I sometime talk to Henry so and often to Rong sometime I copy to you, mainly you, Rong and this Henry whoever that week administrator dealing - mainly three of you.

INT: I mean how well does that communication work, would you like more communication is it just right, is it more than you would like?

RES: I think it's just right so I don't have any kind of issue with that actually so I never wait a month or two to get answers it's always in hours I mean one or two hours so it is like that I never face any kind of trouble with this communication channel so from the day I start my role so I think I get really good support so I don't have any kind of complaint on that.

INT: Good, so in your experience now, do you think that the staff at Northshore and the staff at UWE share a common value in quality and what they're doing to achieve quality. Do you feel it's a shared concept of quality or do you think it's something you just do because you have to do it?

RES: It is not like that what I feel is that we do share it for example even when the first time you mark our project, ok Rong thought the mark was up a bit high because of that she scrutinise it and also not only that she [0:24:16.2 *didn't stop there she sent a*] couple of examples also. In that way ok so what I feel is we try our best to align with that level so I feel good about that so from my end I think I don't know the gap because I am in the system because of that I can't explain about the gap. So most of what I feel is that we did what UWE expected.

INT: So you don't think there's a gap?

RES: Yes, it is my case.

INT: That there's no gap?

- RES: Yeah, thing is in terms of exam paper and all this marking all this thing but I am not sure whether I am the right one because I am in the process so it may be some external party can see.
- INT: I mean I'm just thinking Rong has never visited Northshore, maybe this year she should, would you like that?
- RES: Yeah I'd really like to meet her and communicate with her face-to-face but even still we have good contact.
- INT: So the next question is the last question there's no right answer it's just to ask you do you think that the collaboration and UWE and Northshore is a partnership of equals, do you feel that both parties are equal in power and influence and each party respects the other party equally or do you think it's not like that?
- RES: Ok so I'm speaking with my experience. So according my experience yes both parties respect each other because ... so you're going [s.l. *to come to moderation Rong never force anything* 0:26:05.2] so you can increase this mark ok it is like that it is just [0:26:13.7 *a suggestion*] so she always value our ... ok, [0:26:16.1 *academic knowledge*] and it is like that because of that with the relationship that I have with link tutor what I feel is it is equal so.
- INT: Good, is there anything else you'd like to add about the partnership and how it works?
- RES: I think it so far it went really well so even I think last time [0:26:44.9 *you stressed student numbers*] even that is really good because of that [0:26:47.6 *now we have student numbers*] especially in software engineering I think UWE do it the right [0:26:54.1 *roles*] so erm ok I have positive feeling about whole the process.
- INT: Ok good, ok well we have finished.
- RES: Thank you very much.
- INT: No thank you and as I said this is not a test. I'm interviewing lots of people here and lots of people at UWE so I'm interviewing the UWE academic staff.

Thank you

Transcript ends 0:27:23.4

Appendix F Transcript extracts from the data

This appendix is the set of all extracts used in the coding and thematic analysis from the 24 anonymised interviews.

Each individual quote appears only once however in the thematic analysis many of these quotes were coded to multiple nodes. The full set of data used in the coding supports the validation of the sample selection in the main report by showing the range of evidence collected and analysed.

The experience of TNE

Sri Lanka is a new partner to UWE isn't it? So maybe they found it profitable in Sri Lanka? SL13 Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

if I were in UWE and I was doing it then I might have basically two intentions; one thing is I can expand the market, it's one thing, profitability. And the other thing is, now education, even though we make a profit out of it, it helps the society basically. We can build up the society, so globally we can give something to the other nations if we can. SL05 Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

if you think in that way, only a few students can go and have that opportunity, to get a degree from their mother country, from a mother university, but, you know, it's a developing country, Sri Lanka, and we have a lot of barriers from this government because our state... we have only state universities and say engineering they took only 2,000 students.... so what happened to the rest? So people who are having money, so rich people, can go abroad, but still the student has the potential but no money, so this is a good opportunity given by UWE for them I think. SL07 Academic, NS

So actually in Sri Lankan society the middle-class people, a lot of middle-class people, are going to state university; highest, top-rank people going abroad, but the remaining upper middle-class people, this is a good opportunity for them. They have the potential but not enough money. They have money but not that much to go aboard. In that case, this [TNE] is very good. SL08 Academic, NS

the parent who can afford, they send their student abroad, actually that cost us huge money for the country but when we have this model [TNE] they can keep their student in the country SL05 Senior Academic and Programme Leader

I studied in state university now I am working here as a lecturer that meaning also it [TNE] has created some opportunity for Sri Lanka. SL05 Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

and of course, you can also get employment opportunities for Sri Lankans to have like a college like [NS], because [NS] currently has about 60... 50 to 60 employees; so if the collaborative production wasn't there, there wouldn't be employment for these 60 people in Sri Lanka. So that I think is a good opportunity. SL13 Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

it's good to have these transnational education here because there are many many students who are capable of doing things and who is to be graduated and who has to have a degree with them and I think only 25,000 are allowed to go into state university so why others are not rubbish? I don't think so, so I think er having these things make Sri Lankans much more educated than the previous situation and also when it comes to this society it's changing, my parents had the same one as their grandparents now here we have to have educated people around Sri Lanka. SL13 Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

it used to be that it was successful if it was making money and I think now I see this very much more as, it's successful if it is generating money... should be generating income. Probably generating surplus that will allow us to do something else but then obviously, we're looking at much wider student and staff engagement activities that enhance the student experience and the staff experience

and internationalise what we do. That's I think what I'm looking for. UK 06 Academic/TNE Development Academic/TNE Development

I think again, maybe this is a cultural stereotype, but we struggle here in the UK to get our students to look beyond our borders, so anything that we can do whilst they are here I think we've got a role, a responsibility around that kind of internationalization agenda. I see TNE as a core part of that. UK04 Senior Management/Leader

the main thing is quality (laughs) because this- this private education is still a kind of I would say developing in Sri Lanka anyway. The main concern is... the main concern is maintaining the quality in Sri Lanka, like if we offer a degree from... let's say if they are getting the degree from UWE whether we have the same quality as the degree. SL05 Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

it will enhance the trustworthiness of the programme that we are offering, that's why if we have a quality programme, if we have this quality assurance part here, the people will trust us about the college and they don't want to... like they can't say 'Okay we don't know how they are setting papers, whether they're setting too easy papers, and going to give you the degree'. Because these people... students are paying money, we are going to give the degree. SL05 Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

if it's a transnational education then the same should be applied to both universities, like the one in UK and the one in Sri Lanka as well. SL13 Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

say the mother university is not in Sri Lanka. So all the staff and the... can be local and the students are also local, so what I feel, if someone think like... a student can think we can purchase the degree. Sometimes the lecturers can think, "We can sell the degree." If these two meet, so it can be a disaster. So therefore I think... So what UWE's doing, always coming and talking to staff and talking to students, that practise... that should continue. SL07 Academic, NS

first fail board I was there this week and how we were discussing the thing, that wasn't happening in my previous place. So I did ask... Their system's totally different, so what they do at their university, they accept. There's no internal conversation like that. And again there's a vote board, so I heard my department head, so in that case, you said also, that UWE individually evaluate each student, so then, under that situation, there's no chance. Again, we have the same example of the papers just to double... monitor, that's moderation, so that is not happening in some private institutes in Sri Lanka, so that is really good because we randomly selected their papers in that case, so we can give frank marks. I think that is... that is really good and again say report, so [inaudible 0:22:19.4] and saying to UWE, so... SL07 Academic, NS

say the mother university is not in Sri Lanka. So all the staff and the... can be local and the students are also local, so what I feel, if someone think like... a student can think we can purchase the degree. Sometimes the lecturers can think, "We can sell the degree." If these two meet, so it can be a disaster. So therefore I think... So what UWE's doing, always coming and talking to staff and talking to students, that practise... that should continue. SL07 Academic, NS

Partnerships are difficult. There is no kind of magic wand or silver bullet really. It's that they are very, very labour intensive, they're time consuming but there are rewards there. UK11 Senior Professional Services

Say for example you have a partner in Singapore, I get a sense that with Singapore they're familiar with quality, they know what they're doing, they will do things to the deadlines, they're used to tight turnaround times, very short times to do things in, they're used to being audited, they're used to having to show that they're doing all of these things. I always have a sense with a partner in that kind

of location that culturally their awareness is higher and I can be more confident and leave them to do it more. UK12 Senior Professional Services

In other areas, Sri Lanka, one... you walk in and people don't know what the heck you're talking about and you know you need to keep a closer eye on that. You need to be watching and I need to let my team know, we need to drive this much harder, we need to push these deadlines more, we need to chase this more. UK12 Senior Professional Services

Communication with this partner is done by email, solely email. We don't Skype. It has been suggested in the past that we do, but we don't use Skype particularly. I'm finding with other partners that that is more and more frequent that people are more and more willing to actually just Skype or we pick up a phone. But this is just email, which makes communication harder. UK12 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

but I think the email communication is difficult. There's a lot of misinterpretation on both sides of those conversations and I think yeah, that's caused its own problems in, this is how we want this regulation to be applied, or this is what we want to happen here. You put that in an email and [interruption] whatever the phrasing is or whatever, it doesn't always come across. Like I've had people come in and say to me, can you come and tell me what you think this email means. UK12 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

The benefits of TNE

if you think in that way, only a few students can go and have that opportunity, to get a degree from their mother country, from a mother university, but, you know, it's a developing country, Sri Lanka, and we have a lot of barriers from this government because our state... we have only state universities and say engineering they took only 2,000 students.... so what happened to the rest? So people who are having money, so rich people, can go abroad, but still the student has the potential but no money, so this is a good opportunity given by UWE for them I think. SL07 ACADEMIC, NS

So actually in Sri Lankan society the middle-class people, a lot of middle-class people, are going to state university; highest, top-rank people going abroad, but the remaining upper middle-class people, this is a good opportunity for them. They have the potential but not enough money. They have money but not that much to go aboard. In that case, this [TNE] is very good. SL8 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS

the parent who can afford, they send their student abroad, actually that cost us huge money for the country but when we have this model [TNE] they can keep their student in the country SL05 Senior Academic and Programme Leader

I studied in state university now I am working here as a lecturer that meaning also it [TNE] has created some opportunity for Sri Lanka. SL5 Senior Academic And Programme Leader

and of course, you can also get employment opportunities for Sri Lankans to have like a college like [SLHEI01], because [SLHEI01] currently has about 60... 50 to 60 employees; so if the collaborative production wasn't there, there wouldn't be employment for these 60 people in Sri Lanka. So that I think is a good opportunity. SL13 Senior Academic and Programme Leader NS

it's good to have these transnational education here because there are many many students who are capable of doing things and who is to be graduated and who has to have a degree with them and I think only 25,000 are allowed to go into state university so why others are not rubbish? I don't think so, so I think er having these things make Sri Lankans much more educated than the previous situation and also when it comes to this society it's changing, my parents had the same one as their grandparents now here we have to have educated people around Sri Lanka. Senior Academic and Programme Leader NS

would like to be exposed to a foreign countries like go abroad and can come back so in that case it's really good that you have studied how things happen all around the world rather than learning examples and scenarios from Sri Lanka. That have given us a competitive edge compared to other Sri Lankan universities SL07 Academic, NS

the main thing is quality (laughs) because this- this private education is still a kind of I would say developing in Sri Lanka anyway. The main concern is... the main concern is maintaining the quality in Sri Lanka, like if we offer a degree from... let's say if they are getting the degree from UWE whether we have the same quality as the degree SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

if we had some kind of private university, we had some kind of a pathway for her in Sri Lanka it would have been better, because now when we send her to New Zealand we'll have to send money for her living and all these kind of things. But if we had that kind of er facility here for those who cannot go to the State University but to the private like... if we can create another path for someone to go to the industry or for the job market, so in that sense it's really beneficial for our system. SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

for a student in Sri Lanka it might be too expensive to complete his 3 year or 4-year degree in the UK. So whereas if you have it in- in-house in Sri Lanka you can get it for a lower cost. And also there can be their parents and study from you know in the same district, and also... like they try to be the same environment; there won't be a change in the environment for the student so it might be more familiar with the setup. And also sometimes for in exchange you can retain within the country because they spend like £10,000 per year, so it's like (laughs) the Sri Lankan money which goes out, so if you do it in Sri Lanka you can retain it. SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS
Senior Academic and Programme Leader NS

because of the maintenance of the quality, you can get a good degree without really going to UK, SL13 Senior Academic and Programme Leader NS

Yes, the only benefit I can see – the cost. They can save a certain amount of money if they study here and if they can get the degree from the foreign university studying here. The only thing what I feel, they can save money, and that is the thing what I feel, but if they go in the... that country I think there are a lot more benefits. SL07 ACADEMIC, NS

If you think in that way, only a few students can go and have that opportunity, to get a degree from their mother country, from a mother university, but, you know, it's a developing country, Sri Lanka, and we have a lot of barriers from this government because our state... we have only state universities and say engineering they took only 2,000 students, less than 2,000 students for engineering for state universities per year, so... I think 2005 less than that amount, so what happened to the rest? So people who are having money, so rich people, can go abroad, but still the student has the potential but no money, so this is a good opportunity given by UWE for them I think. SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

it creates some opportunity, there are some parents they can afford the local degree if it is available SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER ;

Study in Sri Lanka or getting foreign degrees because all of them aren't capable of going abroad and maybe they're not financially able SL13 Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

early colonial period where a lot of our doctors, engineers, went to the UK to do their higher degrees. That expertise was brought back from the training that we received and when in Sri Lanka made use of that to start our own courses and now we have a lot of varying courses SL02

Capacity building

Sri Lanka being a small country and a small community could tend to get isolated in the educational field if we are to make it our own standards, or develop our own standards. SL02

the collaborations have made it possible for the Sri Lankan universities and students to bring themselves up to international standard, where they are not confined to working or practicing only in this country, but they are able to go out and practice anywhere in the world SL02

Teaching methods, and especially now we go through all the quality assurance processes so we also get to know all that. SL04

Well erm personally this is my belief, the education system in the UK is excellent from what I have experienced and erm having this relationship between [SLHEI1] and [UKHEI] it actually, it does not only help the students but it actually helps the lecturers to actually properly organise the work and deliver the right level of right standard for education. SL11 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS

Part of what, in effect, the partnership needs to do, and part of the reason why I suspect that they are interested in engaging with the UK institution, is that they can start to develop that know how themselves. UK04 SENIOR MANAGEMENT/LEADER

UKHEI has a reputation around quality assurance. In very crude terms that's what the partner in Sri Lanka or in Oman or Hong Kong are buying. If I compare the Hong Kong partner then they've been doing that for a long time now. They've built up their knowhow. You've got to think at some point from their own market perspective they'll no longer need the [UKHEI] UK brands UK04 SENIOR MANAGEMENT/LEADER

The moderation process of the papers, I think, because we have that internal moderation. In that case, that is again good, so then we send for a second moderation to UWE. So again... So I'm happy because our paper is assessing, evaluating with two other expert people. So that is a good thing, for me also. Sometimes we're also learning, because as new lecturers we're learning. Er, I don't know if my answer is that... Am I on the track of the answer? SL07 ACADEMIC, NS

we need to repeat, repeat, repeat, repeat, repeat, the information for it to go in and get done. That's the hard thing. I think that's why there's no moving on because you're always going back and doing things you know that you've covered before. UK12 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

I think they largely do because they're told they have to do it rather than they understand they have to do it. I very much think that. There was a suggestion quite near the beginning of the partnership that we send somebody in for six months to work with them and set up their policies and structures and it never happened. I was asked to go and I said no, I'm not doing it, because I felt that it would be... it just would be a big mistake that you would send someone out there for six months, you'd sort things out, you'd leave and it would go backwards a step. UK12 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

we put effort into SLHEI1 but it doesn't seem to stick in terms of procedure or understanding or capacity. UK12 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

I think in some ways it is leadership because you don't have a leader saying this is what you need to know, you need to sort this out, get on with it, learn it, do it. I think that's part of it. If you don't have a leader who's looking for people who are able to do it, you stick with people who you've got who maybe can't do it, but you never pull them up about it, you never say, you need to learn how to do this or let me help you, how can I do some development so that you can actually improve your skills here. UK12 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

The local higher education context

there is this benchmark available for the State Universities that more top students are selected for the State Universities. So the lower students are now going to the private universities, that's the main concern [about the private sector], other than that it's not the problem with the UK [TNE providers], that's what I hear. That's their [state sector] problem, the students that are the cream of the country are selected for the State Universities and others are going to get the private education, that's the suspicion they're having, the level of the college of the student so they think those who cannot perform well in their A-levels can't perform well in other circumstances. SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

in the Sri Lanka about 100, or 100,000, about 120,000 students get qualified for A-levels, that is minimum 3 passes. Out of that about- only about 25,000 students get the chance to enter the state sector universities where the degrees are offered totally free, free of charge, so they think that, okay, if the student has to get 3 pass three A's to enter the state sector university which is free, and if they can enter the private sector university with 3 passes they are minimum, they think they are selling the degree, (laughs) so they-they don't like it, SL13 Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

feel that they [state sector graduate] think they are the cream of the country, like they are virtuous and others were not chosen. I know that's not a good attitude, but that's how we see it. SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

that [quality] debate is going on now with obviously the graduates from the State Universities, because now they are the people who are having a say in this country still. There was no private University in Sri Lanka, so that's their main debate and that's their main concern. SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

when it comes to the State University we were... I'm not criticising the educational system but it was basically some kind of a parrot-like situation we had SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

But here students have time to understand things, they didn't have time to understand... SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

when I was a student, on the other hand we were kind of afraid to go and talk to our lecturers because, I don't know, it might be our personal characteristics. Still any of us from the best didn't go and ask from them why we got this, and where we went wrong, that kind of thing. SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

only recently [in Sri Lanka] we have followed this feedback for the coursework, earlier there was no feedback for the student, it was just marked and then given to the student. But here sometimes I feel we have a better quality in this feedback than setting exams, marking exams, we have... yes, because once like when we were the students in the State University sometimes we didn't know how we got this mark particularly. We don't know, and sometimes we... sometimes we were like 'Oh Doctor, how do I get this mark?' SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

it's like I think- what my mother told me was when they- when they had private banks in Sri Lanka there was the same debate earlier, but with time people getting to know about these things, now there is no such difference whether we can trust private banks or not SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

people don't know about these things, because people don't know what is the quality assurance, what I feel is we have better quality assurance sometimes than in State Universities, because when it comes to the State Universities the... obviously I have to say the marks are not double marked, especially

when it comes to the coursework the coursework's are not double marked. SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

it will enhance the trustworthiness of the programme that we are offering, that's why if we have a quality programme, if we have this quality assurance part here, the people will trust us about the college and they don't want to... like they can't say 'Okay we don't know how they are setting papers, whether they're setting too easy papers, and going to give you the degree'. Because these people... students are paying money, we are going to give the degree. SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

the state sector universities where the degrees are offered totally free, free of charge, so they think that, okay, if the student has to get three A grade A's to enter the state sector university which is free, and if they can enter the private sector university with 3 passes, they are minimum, they think they are selling the degree, (laughs) so they-they don't like it, SL03

it is the general tendency that people tend to respect and look up to the state sector more. I think maybe since that is the-the perception of the people, so sometimes even some schools teach us they think that okay if they go to a private sector university it's like you know a lower standard or something. SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

the perception is that private universities are inferior in quality compared to state universities – there's a very clear differentiation in Sri Lankan higher education market. SL8 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS

when... say the mother university is not in Sri Lanka. So all the staff can be local and the students are also local, so what I feel, if someone think like... a student can think we can purchase the degree. Sometimes the lecturers can think, "We can sell the degree." If these two meet, so it can be a disaster. So therefore I think... So what UWE's doing, always coming and talking to staff and talking to students, that practice... that should continue SL07 ACADEMIC, NS

since this is a private university it might find difficulties in attracting employees, because in Sri Lanka the tendencies for a person to join the public state sector because the state sector offers more perks, they get sabbatical leave and scholarships to study abroad, so all that. Even the one clothes allowance they get in Sri Lanka, so maybe when they join, a new graduate let's say would rather prefer to join the state sector university as a lecturer than joining a private university, and leave when everything might be different. SL13 Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

they get a lot of freedom in the state universities also, so it might face difficulties in attracting employees especially academic staff. So that might backfire in the teaching process, and especially to supervised study search projects. And then again we have to depend on visiting staff from states like the universities, and then again we might not get the marking on time, we have to chase. Because if we had the staff in-house it's easy, even for staff training that we do conduct from time to time like the UKHEI does, we might not be able to give the same opportunities for visiting staff. And then when they give us the marked work sometimes we have to remark, so it might cause double work and delays in getting things done on time. SL13, Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

but when I'm working to state universities so I have recognition outside the work – it is kind of prestige - because people know when I say University of [state sector] people know it but when I say Northshore College, ok people don't know it. So because of it there can be people discouraged – even qualified people - discouraged to come. SL5 Senior Academic and Programme Leader NS

that [quality] debate is going on now with obviously the graduates from the State Universities, because now they are the people who are having a say in this country still. There was no private

University in Sri Lanka, so that's their main debate and that's their main concern.SL5 Senior Academic and Programme Leader NS

In the state universities the staff are always discussing, the top people always discussing to protect their system, their education system from that corruption. So that is a good conversation and discussion in Sri Lankan education system, as I know. So they always think in state university but I think that it's good if the private unis in Sri Lanka, all private unis, can make that kind of forum and discussion, say, as an example and if they can meet and then discuss maintaining the quality because UWE people they don't have good experience or good knowledge of the Sri Lankan culture so SL07 ACADEMIC, NS

Institutional relationships and power relations in TNE

at strategic level is the most important factor whereby the management of both institutions they have established some level of trust UK07

Making sure that the decision makers have got the same goal at both ends, both institutions and not be driven entirely by finances.UK07I feel we are both equal, but we are not that much experienced as you are SL5 Senior Academic and Programme Leader NS

we are, in my perception, the driving force, but that we have a willing partner. That's how I feel.UK02 SENIOR PROFESSION SERVICES

I think in the current situation... I'm just talking overall, the Sri Lankan society situation and thinking, having that background, so keeping the power in the UKHEI is bit more... is good, because so far it's good. [inaudible 0:38:53.3] he's doing a really good job just to maintain the quality and the standard, but that can be depending on people and say after... assuming then someone else comes, then we don't know his or her attitude, so therefore sometimes I'm not happy with the Sri Lankan... some of the people and their attitude and how they try to implement their things in certain institute.SL07 ACADEMIC, NS

quality-wise there can be issues and also resource-wise even we can't use same experience SL5 Senior Academic and Programme Leader,

I wouldn't say it was equal. I'd say they were much more reliant upon UKHEI and particularly in terms of much more work being done, I think, by academic staff here at UKHEI and there wasn't as much independence in terms of being able to take ownership, I think, at SLHEI compared to what we would expect here at the university. UK01

we have been struggling and then it's about workload balance so here also we have quite a lot of work and we have been learning everything and in terms of documentation, teaching, assessment, marking, line marking, second marking, some of the things are basically new for me also I haven't experienced this when I was a lecturer at [state university, SL] and during my short period at [UK HEI] I didn't have experience it SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS Senior Manager/Leader

SLHEI1, as you're well aware, is a kind of outpost, very small numbers of students – I think they only had sort of seven on a three year course recently; so partly the numbers mean that they don't have power, I think you have to have equal student numbers to have power. UK08

And it felt like equals between us at a Programme Leader and Link Tutor level, but I say above that I know that the management as we see as we withdraw from it, are very much required By UWE to achieve certain standards and even as far as the – and quite rightly – as far as levels of student satisfaction with the sports facilities, the social facilities and that UWE – we dictated NS what is expected to provide the quality of experience that should be available to any student graduating with a

UWE degree. So in that case the power lies with UWE, we're not afraid to use NS but they're afraid to use us. UK08

it is always men who are in power [at SLHEI1] and they tend to have recruited younger women, or young men to the other roles and they tend to – there's definitely the power hierarchy is very firmly in place with little two way communication and quite a lot of distrust between the hierarchy UK08

because he's a professor and what Programme Leader didn't feel there was almost any point in her talking to him about his poor teaching and poor commitment because he would never listen to her because she's lower in the educational hierarchy, even though she's the Programme Leader, he's Module Leader – he's a Prof and so she got me to talk to him because I'm from the Partner Institution and that has a hierarchy. UK01

One of the things was when we got in the partnership, the agreement and all that, when it was explained to us and set up, the quality assurance aspect was there. But through the years, they have I think also explained the requirement of quality assurance and what it is for. So, we have understood. SL04

We have understood it's part and parcel of our partnership agreement. Plus when someone else needs a degree or a qualification, there needs to be quality assurance from their side so if we are in that partnership we have to abide by all their requirements. SL04

QAA coming up from their side, and to look for our things as well, how we mark and how we produce things. SL5 Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

They infer that they're merely there to deliver exactly what that Module Leader puts in place, so that therefore disables the partner from updating examples to making them locally relevant and to adapting it. UK08

I wouldn't say it was equal. I'd say they were much more reliant upon UKHEI and particularly in terms of much more work being done, I think, by academic staff here at UKHEI and there wasn't as much independence in terms of being able to take ownership, I think, at SLHEI1 compared to what we would expect here at the university. UK01

I don't feel [inaudible 0: 16:15.8] telling them what to do, I think it's more about giving guidance in view of us having that more detailed knowledge of the operations and the procedures. UK01

Obviously we have very rigid regulations and there are certain processes, but I do think we have to understand that we are working collaboratively with others. It's much alluded to maybe sometimes it's us leading the way, it is still a partnership and we need to manage that partnership effectively and make sure that the partner does feel that they have equally got a say in things that are going on and that we try to be flexible where we can. UK01

SLHEI1, as you're well aware, is a kind of outpost, very small numbers of students – I think we only had sort of seven on a five year course recently; so partly the numbers mean that they don't have power, I think you have to have equal student numbers to have power. UK08

I think one of the major points is that actually they accept everything from us. So I have never seen a situation where we say for something do it this way or don't do it this way and they say no. So they always try to follow what we are doing. Or what we are asking them to do UK09

My impression was that actually there was this feeling always that we are being bossy with them. So whatever we say that they will do it..... so to have this ability to accept if there is anything coming from them that can benefit us. UK09

but their more permanent staff seem to defer to us a lot I would say, but I think they don't necessarily have to, that they could have that academic argument if they wanted to. That there's no reason why they shouldn't. UK12 Senior Professional Services

Organisation and management

And of course, the UWE coming here made me strengthen the awards we put in place because they have a very clear cut administrative process, very mechanical, but, it is much more precise with dates and you know that has to be amalgamated with our year planning, and all that you know, co-ordinated. SL02

An academic in a university system is not just a teacher only so, if you are to encourage this person you have the academic who is a teacher, then the academic who is an administrator and the academic who maintains certain ethics and standards. Now you have to put these three together and when you bring them together only you get the proper academic who is able to teach, maintain ethical standards within the teaching process and do the extended administration which is required for the teacher to teach. SL02

I actually think there's something like a link tutor should kind of be its own role really. I think that's probably enough work there on a day to day basis in terms of supporting teams in the UK and supporting the international partners, that that's almost something that needs to be broken down into its own role. UK05

I think again it comes back to academic administrative split between the registrar and support she has and whoever's working with her in terms of... or whoever may be doing the role, and what sort of support they're giving and training they're giving and also the understanding they have of UKHEI's processes and what we expect from them but I think there probably needs to be a great deal of support given to people because it's quite specialist knowledge and I think that it requires a certain sort of set of skills to get your head round it, particularly from an administrative point of view. UK01

academic training and what's emerging in the UK education system in terms of understanding teaching quality and the impact of being able to plan and write assessments effectively, is something I think would be hugely beneficial for them. I think there's only so much we can do without actually having people going out there and delivering quite high focused training for them. UK01

I think again it comes back to academic administrative split between the registrar and support she has and whoever's working with her in terms of... or whoever may be doing the role, and what sort of support they're giving and training they're giving and also the understanding they have of UKHEI's processes and what we expect from them but I think there probably needs to be a great deal of support given to people because it's quite specialist knowledge and I think that it requires a certain sort of set of skills to get your head round it, particularly from an administrative point of view. UK01

now created and trained the staff who are now able to run the school, as a University or academic institution worthy of, you know, professional qualifications and ...SL02

The institution itself was not a cohesive unit where I could say, 'look, we are managing, we are doing all this on our own' because there was just [0:17:33.8] blindly, so what I'm now trying to do and [0:17:38.4] bring this slowly, because it's not easy changing the attitudes of the staff, they are still used to this old system, 'I have my practise outside and why should I waste my time here? I can do my job and go off'. SL02

as academics, got used to that because we know our work does not finish at 7 or 8; we work in the evening but when we go home if there's a call, we deal with it and if there are students out in the field – it's their problem and you deal with it. SL02

my success story are the two deputies and I'm very proud of what they have achieved because earlier when I came here for the first year or so or year and a half I was not able to take even a days' leave because you have to be there like when you came was otherwise things don't move – nothing! SL02

And of course, the UWE coming here made me strengthen the awards we put in place because they have a very clear cut administrative process, very mechanical, but, it is much more precise with dates and you know that has to be amalgamated with our year planning, and all that you know, co-ordinated. These are other little things that I could do, designations and posts and committees, which everything seems to be operating now and [name] is the liaison between but it's such between UKHEI and SIHEI2 She come and tell me tomorrow we have to send the document, so it's a corporate governance system that has been brought in over the last two years and put into place which I believe would make the institution or will make the institution run smoothly. SL02

where it's had a very shaky start and it's gradually improving and there are people who are now really beginning to see what we want in terms of the partnership and also see how it benefits them and actually saying, "We will do this and this", and that's been helpful to us and again it's that kind of point of seeing the way things are done at UKHEI and it's something that's beneficial to them in terms of it's improving that academic services, improving the student experiences, improving them as an organisation. I think that's key. UK01

So one of that tasks that I took on when I took on this course was to put a mechanism into place where the processes run smoothly, that is the administrative process, and also training the staff so that they can take part of the responsibilities and manage the academic administration on their own. Not only the teaching so since I came almost after I joined, almost immediately I created two posts of the deputies managing the two part two courses under my direction. So we have now created and trained the staff who are now able to run the school, as a University or academic institution worthy of, you know, professional qualifications SL02

An academic in a university system is not just a teacher only so, if you are to encourage this person you have the academic who is a teacher, then the academic who is an administrator and the academic who maintains certain ethics and standards. Now you have to put these three together and when you bring them together only you get the proper academic who is able to teach, maintain ethical standards within the teaching process and do the extended administration which is required for the teacher to teach. SL02

we were frustrated with SLHEI1, but it can be so much more if they'd got their act together, so I think it's been a bit of experiment. UK08

But now, since it got RIBA accreditation and the UWE collaborations and so on and so forth it has come to a proper tertiary education institution, almost university level. Now with that there had to be many changes within the administrative and [inaudible] structure. The staff had to be trained because they were used to a totally different type of work, different approach, not to the teaching of the content, but to work in an education institution because they were also part-time, they came, they did their work and then they went off but and did not not have that feeling of belonging to an institution. SL02

Now having done this work for one year with me they know exactly what to do. Before before I tell them that they are on this and we can worked out our charts. Another thing that I put in place when I came here we work on a two year plane [shows quality assurance process gant chart.] You will find that every little thing that we done is there. Whether it's sending off exam papers and sending the papers to be printed or whatever it is on that- so once you do that the rest becomes mechanical. The registrar picks it up, my secretary picks it up and even I forget, they come in and tell me, 'look, there are things to be done today'. So those are the systems that I put into place in here after I cam e here and I'm fairly happy - it does work, running smoothly [laughs] SL02

as a more mature TNE provider now I think we should be making that assessment as part of the due diligence process. How far down that maturity continuum are they in terms of their understanding of the processes. UK04 SENIOR MANAGEMENT/LEADER

I think at times we struggle because the professional services colleagues don't understand that we are in a partnership here. We are not in a kind of dictating the terms of and conditions UK04 SENIOR MANAGEMENT/LEADER

I think it's symptomatic of our immaturity as a TNE provider that we have a system here that produces a particular type of service for a particular need i.e. our undergraduates, primarily undergraduates here at [inaudible 0:25:36.0], that then tries – if we try and put something into that system that doesn't fit and this is a common problem, it doesn't matter whether we're talking about part-time students or degree apprenticeships or TNE, it's we struggle with activities that don't suit the dominant model. UK04 SENIOR MANAGEMENT/LEADER

I am trying to inculcate into the systems here. So earlier they were just coming here, teaching design or something and going off and then the office used to bring specialist lecturers, do the lecture and go off. SL02

it's not easy changing the attitudes of the staff, they are still used to this old system, 'I have my practise outside and why should I waste my time here? I can do my job and go off'. SL02

we call them full-time but they are not here full-time; they are given their slots like in many universities but what I tell them is 'look, I don't want you to be here 24 hours/7, but we want 24 hour commitment so that you are committed to the future SL02

the staff here they are committed to their teaching, it's just that they're not committed to the academic process which probably they're not aware of or they didn't know that, they say to you "become a Head of a Department or a Dean" – you're not aware of it – you just come and teach and go and, so what, "that's not my job". Like "you fill the forms – I will teach and go". SL02

And then again we have to depend on visiting staff from states like the universities, and then again we might not get the marking on time, we have to chase. Because if we had the staff in-house it's easy, even for staff training that we do conduct from time to time like the UWE does, we might not be able to give the same opportunities for visiting staff. And then when they give us the marked work sometimes we have to remark, so it might cause double work and delays in getting things done on time. SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

anyway senior professors so they don't put much effort we have met people like that but the young staff the young people who have taught us they are very competent like they are trying to develop their career so they put more effort to guide us more so I think that is the difference in the perspective as to how we would see the quality in education. SL8 Academic, Lecturer, NS

Also consistency of academic staff, partners overseeing – well they have a lot of change of academic staff like perhaps people coming in on temporary contracts and then going at the end of the semester. That can be really challenging UK02 Senior Professional Services

institutions in that part of the world have a lot more kind of visiting lecturers who will move on sort of a little bit more quickly and perhaps that complicated things as well. So I think the attitude was right and the perception was right, but I just think sometimes that realities perhaps would give the impression that the attitude was different. UK05

*you have people who end up having quite narrow myopic viewpoints of how the bigger picture looks being partnerships or how the university is run. Or how the sector is shaping up at the time. How things work in country in terms of our partnerships.*UK11 Senior Professional Services

I guess that there's a variety of factors that will interplay to define whether something could be defined as mature or immature. I guess if you look from the bottom up for kind of the structure governance kind of financial stability of an institution, how long it's been established, how long it's been operating, what level it's been operating the kind of programmes it's been operating, the country or region of operation and kind of the unpinning educational system that's in place. So a variety of things that kind of coalesce. UK11 Senior Professional Services

*I think that it's an iterative process [to become mature in terms of quality assurance]. It can be a very long drawn out process. I have seen partnerships go through five, ten year cycles and it does take time. Bodies in the UK that go in with an expectation that within kind of two years you have a partner that will understand everything that you're doing and it will be really straight forward to manage and not time consuming. I think there's a massive naivety within that. I guess it depends the starting point that you have and the level of maturity at the time really. But partnerships need to be cultivated. They need to nurture.*UK11 Senior Professional Services

I think you need to embark on a development process but it's bespoke for that particular partnership at the time and we'll look at the partnership via a variety of lenses so looking at kind of the structures of governance, looking at the personnel involved from an academic point of view, looking at their systems and processes that underpin that and make sure that you have counterparts from each of those categories from each institutions and regular contact who take a very kind of candid view of where they are and have good self-perception of where the relationship is at the time and address any issues as and when they arise as part of a kind of structured programme development. UK11 Senior Professional Services

*I think if you are starting from a lower level then the initial stages of dialogue will be about compliance but as both parties get used to working with each other and into a rhythm of the partnership then it's more of an exchange of knowledge and of ideas and it's a lot more of a kind of [inaudible 0:21:39.8] approach rather than looking at where the degree awarding body appear and the partner it's the kind of subservient when it's more about a relationship with both parties pulling both ways.*UK11 Senior Professional Services

the relationship with SLHEI1 has not been one on which there are kind of two broadly equal partners. It has been very much a relationship of degree awarding body and the franchisee I guess as it were. UK11 Senior Professional Services

*We actually saw some improvement when he [previous executive dean at SLHEI1] was there and when he said he was leaving it was like, oh god, you could just see a backward slide and we have. From my point of view when [name] was there, I had someone to talk to about the operations, about how things were going to happen and when they were going to be done, how they were going to be done. He passed that message on to his team, he tried to get them to do it, tried to improve the way they did it, pushed for them to do it and he's gone.*UK12 Senior Professional Services

I would be keen to encourage more regular Skype conversations and telephone conversations with our administrators to their counterparts, to have that contact more. Again, I think that that is something we are doing more and more with new partners. We do have more people picking up the phone. We've got international dialling on our phones now which has been a bit of a struggle [inaudible 00:38:45] could have it. We're finding ways to access Skype even though the university doesn't support it. We're working on ways around that so that people can speak more regularly in different kind of formats than email. But I think with SLHEI1 again, we struggle to get past the email as the main form of communication. UK12 Senior Professional Services

I don't know their facilities to Skype exactly. I mean maybe that's part of the issue is that I don't have a way of Skyping you when I'm at work because my computer at work's not set up to do it or the network's not strong enough or whatever and I don't have a device that I can bring in from home necessarily. I don't know. It might be things like that that limit our ability to do it. UK12 Senior Professional Services

Perceptions of quality and standards and quality assurance

Quality in higher education system to me would mean that we give the competency that the student requires to go out and treat himself, or get him to practice in a working environment in whatever locality that he is in SL02

Sometimes I feel overloaded but still so far I enjoy that culture because, er, personally I think that when I can work, I should work. So, therefore, I like to work with deadline, and the other thing is the moderation comments, I'm so happy with having comments for my work. So I feel I learn and I can upgrade myself with comments SL07 Academic, NS

Sri Lanka we have been meeting a fairly high standard especially in the professional courses. SL02

if you are grading a student as a first class student, when you go outside or when he's in an academic or he's in an industrial career he has... he should be able to do a first class job through his upgraded knowledge, through his upgraded capabilities; SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

logical reasoning in engineering judgement, help him to think logically,

if he can understand basics well, and if he knows how to apply, think and be creative SL5 Senior Academic And Programme Leader

standards it's just like kind of a benchmark that we have.

we always try to follow the standard but I basically believe in going beyond the standard SL5 Senior Academic And Programme Leader

[difference in quality and standards between the UK and Sri Lanka?] Yes, since I'm in this system now, I know there is not any kind of difference between those two. But for the people who are not in this system they... still they don't know SL5 Senior Academic and Programme Leader.

for a particular degree these are the standards that you will need at the end, like when you're awarded... the university is awarding a degree then in the beginning when it's at approval stage there will be some specifications, benchmarking, and then it is up to the awarding institute to maintain the status of the benchmark, SL13, Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

Erm, standard is something that you er mention in the beginning, I think. Then er, then quality is obtaining it during the conduction of the programme, you have to ensure you obtain the standard at the end. SL13 Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

quality reflects... sorry, the potential, improving the potential of the students reflects the quality of whatever the education programme. So say we take a student at the first year, so then after three or four years they've... there should be a rapid increase of the student after three years when he or she graduated, so potential. I mean the potential. Potential with the knowledge that they... the university deliver to that person. SL07 Academic, NS

gain knowledge... it should be useful or it should be applicable to the industry, otherwise it is no point of that knowledge or being graduate. So maintain that quality to get that same... with updated knowledge and the technology, so everything, the combination of everything, should be delivered to the student to make a perfect graduate. SL07 Academic, NS

standard again, the quality and the attitude of the lecturer, that's a part, and available resources of the university, And the background and the attitude of the students another part. So the combination of all three parts, SL07 Academic, NS

quality was mainly about maintaining the standards and being consistent with the standards SL8 Academic, Lecturer, NS

I think yes erm in Sri Lankan context [pause] basically how quality is assessed by our parents before we being sent to the system and a major thing that they would see is like when we don't have very senior lecturers who are professors, doctors who have graduated from the local state universities but I think I don't know how it is in other countries like in Europe but I think they are I mean in Sri Lanka the parents are more concerned about their designation and you know about more senior they are whereas I believe personally in Europe it's based on your competency and skills rather than your designation maybe you are a very senior professor but still when you are an associate professor you feel more competent I think you have more chance of going high whereas in Sri Lanka like quality I mean some people believe quality comes with your designation whereas we have experience some professors you know...SL8 Academic, Lecturer, NS

anyway senior professors so they don't put much effort we have met people like that but the young staff the young people who have taught us they are very competent like they are trying to develop their career so they put more effort to guide us more so I think that is the difference in the perspective as to how we would see the quality in education.SL8 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS

I would say teaching is the same, material the same, the marking scheme, everything the same. We don't actually see how they deliver UK03

Yes and they also believe that if the professors are all graduates from local universities they are more likely to be high quality education SL8 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS

Mostly, yes. In Sri Lanka mostly higher education decisions are made by parents because even when I was being enrolled also that we went to an exhibition like check all the stalls; like, you know, analysed everything and brought all the brochures home and one by one finally they decided "ok this is best place you should go". SL8 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS

assessment according to the learning outcomes I think this all about the quality SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

meeting expectations of our student that is the quality L09

if you think about an exam paper there's a certain level that we have SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

we help keep a standard that mean [lectures] should reflect the standard and it is done by some OK academic and also it is it should go with the syllabus also and also we have maintained the quality I mean. SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

explain the quality let's say of the education given to the student and then of course we set certain standards er meeting certain outcomes in the programme if you take a particular programme then we want the graduates of that programme to perform er and then compete with anybody when they are graduate so if they can er compete with anybody in the industry of course SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

standards here then I know that now we have come a long way from [start of provision] SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

when I was doing my Master's the lecturer could set the examination paper in the morning and then just distribute it in the evening, there's no moderation process of the exam paper for the marking also there is no such moderation and then it is more like localised and then they graduate and I know there are students that are very good and for them they don't need to actually er mistrust. SL10 Senior Manager/Leader NS

I need to get that feedback and now I will say to speak to the lecturer and give certain instructions about how to deal with the students so you can get that feedback somehow it could be directly or indirectly through a UWE person so students will give that feedback SL10 Senior Manager/Leader NS

when it comes to quality I erm - my view of - I think it's the like [pause] - how I say it - delivering a very er proper education and erm regarding the discipline, [s.l. giving 0:06:10.12] the proper material information and erm assessing them erm through exams, evening class tests, mock exams and course works. Erm, yeah and also assessing students who need extra support er when it is required for them SL11 Academic, Lecturer, NS

when I say proper it's more assessments and more course works actually and to monitor each student's progress erm progress in the lectures and also to have a closer connection between the lecturer and the student so that the student can speak to the lecturer about any issues they are facing in the lectures SL11 Academic, Lecturer, NS

standards it has to be the level, the right level, of what we are teaching and delivering to the students so that they can erm tackle problems they face in their disciplines basically when they go to their jobs so and I also believe that standards must little by little increase eventually. SL11 Academic, Lecturer, NS

actually welcome criticism because I think erm, when it comes to students I think they should complain whatever they don't find helpful or if they need something. SL11 Academic, Lecturer, NS

quality in higher education is like employability, how much you adapted, how much you are taught, being taught in the higher education to go and work in a place SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

here you give a case and you have to be the manage and you have to solve the case so now then in UWE I think they are providing that employability side of that so I find it, I call it quality. Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

Who sets them? That be a hard question for me, I think who sets standards, may be if it's in a City, if it's like you know a University under UGC you know University Grants Commission then it has that ability to create standards [0:06:17.0] universities so I think UGC have to set standards to meet that quality, we have to have these many things. SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS

the main requirement would be er the input quality of the students basically let's say if a student is not good enough for to be in that particular programme how much you try to input then it's going to be a waste SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS Senior Academic and Programme Leader, NS .

I think there is possibly as many differences between the management view of quality and standards within our own university and some of the operation on the ground by staff as there is between us and Sri Lanka. *In other I think what management understands from the quality and standards doesn't always filter down to the people who are delivering on the ground, who are doing the moderation processes, who are checking the module specs and so on in the quality assurance side of that. I think that our own staff sometimes don't really understand why we are doing these kinds of things and I*

think that nearly all the staff in Sri Lanka don't understand why we are doing these kind of things. UK10 Senior Management/Leader

I think we certainly need to get management buy in from Sri Lanka that we are doing these things for a reason so that they can then be the people or transmit that through their staff and explain why we are doing certain things and what the importance of it is and why that gives their degree and the degree that they supply to their students for value in the market. So I think it's about we would help their leadership to really embrace that. UK10 SENIOR MANAGEMENT/LEADER

So one logical output of that is that then we must only ever do business with the people who have worked exactly in the same place as us and only people in the UK can possibly understand quality assurance and I don't think that's not what I am saying, I am sure it's perfectly possible for people in other parts of the world to have a very strong and clear idea of quality assurance. UK10 SENIOR MANAGEMENT/LEADER

There are differences [in how partners perceive quality and standard] and they will depend on cultural context, individuals, within institutions, where that institution is, the level of maturity of that institution, whatever kind of commercial pressures that institution might have at the time. UK11 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

It's like explaining the external examiner system concept for the first time to colleagues from another country that haven't been involved in that kind of regime. Once you kind of cut through the cultural differences that you'll encounter in the initial stages and understand the kind of benchmark element to that and how they'll provide sufficient reassurance and how you are bringing in external ideas and how that can foster further development. So it's a question of kind of taking people on that journey with you to understand what the key objectives are to what might seem to be arbitral even rigid and unreasonable processes in the first time. UK11 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Differences in perceptions of quality. I think there's definitely a different understanding of it and why you have it and what you're doing. I don't think in Sri Lanka they understand what quality is about. I don't think they realise that they need to offer that to the student, as well as a degree, that it has to be a degree that comes with quality, that's worthwhile, it's meaningful, I don't get the sense that they understand that. But I think here that's something we understand, maybe because it's hundreds of years of background of offering degrees. It's a competitive market now if you like, as people know you have to have a quality qualification, you have to be able to show that and evidence it or the students won't come. I think there is a difference, yeah. UK12 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Managing the quality assurance process

In the state universities the staff are always discussing, the top people always discussing to protect their system, their education system from that corruption. So that is a good conversation and discussion in Sri Lankan education system, as I know. So they always think in state university but I think that it's good if the private unis in Sri Lanka, all private unis, can make that kind of forum and discussion, say, as an example and if they can meet and then discuss maintaining the quality because UWE people they don't have good experience or good knowledge of the Sri Lankan culture SL07 ACADEMIC, NS

maybe parent university has a good process but even then to implement it we need to have certain resources here also. SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

although we say we try to maintain the same quality, maybe in the Sri Lankan context it's not possible to obtain the same because- and again, cultural differences. Because I have visited UK UWE, so I know how it is, like even the canteens, the student areas and everything, of course they charge a

higher price but it's different. And in Sri Lanka maybe the students don't get the same environment sometimes, SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS ADMINISTRATOR

because the standards are dependent on the available resources, I think. Say the students want to search some journal papers regarding civil engineering, so then the university doesn't have access to the specific journal sites, the science and engineering, in that kind of site, so then the maintaining the standard is a problem, SL07 ACADEMIC, NS

parent university, maintaining the expected quality can be difficult because maybe parent university has a good process but even then to implement it we need to have certain resources here also. SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

So according to my experience yes both parties respect each other because ... so when you're going to come to moderation [the link tutor] never force anything so you can increase this mark ok it is like that it is just a suggestion] so she always value our ... ok, academic knowledge and it is like that because of that with the relationship that I have with link tutor that I feel it is equal so. SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

I think they [SLHEI2] also take it as a point of pride that they've got such a strong tie with UKHEI and the awards I've been involved with is that they seem to be very reflective in terms of their bettering the partnership and bettering their delivery of the subjects and they're very much... the feedback I've got from them is effectively that they've really benefited themselves, it's changed the way they do things, it's improved their practice and that they constantly look to do that. They have an academic culture there, a professional culture, where they seem very, very focused on that kind of improvement and delivery. UK01

Quality in higher education system to me would mean that we give the competency that the student requires to go out and treat himself, or get him to practice in a working environment in whatever locality that he is in SL02

I think it's actually really good because I mean considering my experience I actually welcome changes of feedback and also UWE somewhat erm well experienced academics, so from the experience I believe new lecturers such as myself can learn a lot. SL11 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS

I think my issues were effectively down to people who were inexperienced on an academic level which was causing a lot of the issues that I encountered, and I think that was just something is really down to time and staff training rather than anything I would say were cultural issues. UK01

given the information and discussions about how to mark er how to use the red pen and green pen, how to write comments like two comments per page and even more and how to like not leave the mark at borderlines and how the moderation process happens and how you are responsible to justify the mark that you have given to the student and the comment as in every assignment or exam you have to SL8 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS

the staff there they come from different universities I suppose and their standard will not be the same standard as we have. I don't say that our standard is the best in the world but we have a standard which we have been trained and have been inducted to achieve and unless same level of induction and training goes at that end in SLHEI1 then the standard will not be the same. UK07

at no point did I feel that they wanted to try and comprise quality for the sake of just getting it done or something like that. UK02 SENIOR PROFESSION SERVICES

aspect about what was being taught; what level it was being marked at and agreeing what's good; what each of the degree classes would represent. But also the level of feedback; the volume of feedback; the quality of feedback to ensure that it would be useful to the students UK08

UK Module Leaders think the work should be marked five to ten percent below what the Partnership Module Leaders think; UK08

I think that it's not entire partner institutions that have a different idea. I think it is individual Module Leaders and the one particular instance I'm thinking of is somebody who was actually a Prof and was part-time and was working for the partner institution and it felt like his concept of what was a literary review – something that should be such a basic across so many different academic disciplines – his idea of that was rather different so I found that in both institutions I've worked with, that I don't think it is a universal thing but I think it's individuals. UK08

Then (pause) we say normally we have these kind of forms we fill in, we have to do these like erm when you're sending the paper to the moderator you have to fill in this form and send it to them. If it is not there sometimes I can fill it in and off-load it. Sometimes there are basic things whether it's a module name and all those kind of things, those things I know I have kind of known I tend to upload these things. SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

When it comes to marking also, normally erm marking comes through me and then it goes to the second marker, actually this time. Last time we had a roster with a marker and then it was the second marker. Since we have a small space there I can go and see okay what is there and then. Anyway my work is easy because our Executive Dean is here, he is much familiar with the system and he also kind of has a look obviously, he sees how it is going and how the marking has been done, and that kind of thing. SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

they're used to the State University procedure and they (pause)... yes, basically they are used to the (laughs) State University procedure now, now we have some staff yes some of them were from the State University but they could er... yeah they would change their way for quality job I would say, something like that. SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

It's really helpful for us to have [name] here because he's the central hub there, but I feel like he is... overall he sees what is happening there but it's really good for the process, we upload the marks and he can chase me and the others, he can chase me as well. I normally don't get offended by that because I'm happy about it, SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

Sometimes I feel overloaded but still so far I enjoy that culture because, er, personally I think that when I can work, I should work. So, therefore, I like to work with deadline, and the other thing is the moderation comments, I'm so happy with having comments for my work. So I feel I learn and I can upgrade myself with comments SL07 ACADEMIC, NS

And about exam paper setting we are given knowledge about the rubric, how to meet, use the module spec, use the learning outcomes and how to save the question paper or the coursework in par with the learning outcome so that, you know, more weight is not going to one learning outcome and one is missed so how to balance it altogether and about how to use the module handbook, how to get the update version and that kind of basic academic quality management framework we are given guidance already. SL8 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS

I think it has really worked very well for me and I had to highlight it. She [name] has been the one you know who has guided me so much she was the first lecturer from UWE that I worked with for; she has actually sent me typed documents about these guidelines. Her one document says, 'this is how you mark', 'this is how you comment', 'this is how you total the marks' - all those [0:28:04.6] so I have used it as a guideline I have got it like from the first day so along with it I have received like really good comments also for my marked work so I think it's really working very well for me and I'm very confident about my marking. SL8 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS

I mean 90% of the times like it's ok, it's ok I mean even minor adjustments are ok 90% of the time because if two people are looking at the same work it's natural that it gets a bit different I mean it's not going to be identical anyways we understand that but sometimes like if there is a large variation we would like to know why because not because of any offence but because we want to correct that mistake the next time when we are marking. SL8 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS

She's tough, she's tough like she would send the pre-moderation sample and she would say you are late but still that is a motivation you know you get to work because she asks for it all the time, I like working with her. SL8 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS

they monitor us for example when we set exam paper we moderate here and also we upload it to partnership university also and there are a number of points where we check this exam paper so in that way at the end we deliver some quality paper SL8 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS

example when we set out exam paper other colleague check that so we do it very seriously. And also from their side, and also not only that it will not stop there – even the external moderator will look at it. Actually I think that is about the quality so but when we think about state university – it won't happen. So even the exam [0:20:28.6 has lots of] issues, for students actually so because of that here it happened very rarely because it is checked in a number of places but because of that I think the process is really good. SL8 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS

we have write this module report and also programme report so it is about ok we are trying to maintain our own qualities for this year we write about the issues that we face and also what other observation and also what are the new things that we need and also we provide what we do next time to fix this thing SL8 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS

we have think about what we thought last time and then it is kind of self-evaluation – that we have done what is expected and so-on. And that is also really good SL8 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS

we have meetings, it is very open, we can discuss any issue and also not only that when we mark the papers and when we submit we always get comments and we do double marking also. SL8 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS

lecturer can't take any sort of [0:21:36.1 privilege] from a student - there are some cases in state universities but here that can never happen. SL8 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS

And then we know whatever we marked is checked by [0:21:57.9 our lead and] also the link tutor and also the external examiner. Because of that we try our best to maintain our quality of marking also because of that I think mainly ok the process is really good

So most of what I feel is that we did what [UK HEI] expected. SL8 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS

we have been struggling and then it's about workload balance so here also we have quite a lot of work and we have been learning everything and in terms of documentation, teaching, assessment, marking, line marking, second marking, some of the things are basically new for me also I haven't experienced this when I was a lecturer at [state university] and during my short period at [UK university] I didn't have that experience SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS SENIOR MANAGER/LEADER

UWE put all these things to make the quality better otherwise there is no point of filling a form or producing programme reports or module reports unless the purpose is to do it better next time, the objective would be to do it better than this time. SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS SENIOR MANAGER/LEADER

I think it's actually really good because I mean considering my experience I actually welcome changes of feedback and also UWE somewhat erm well experienced academics, so from the

experience I believe new lecturers such as myself can learn a lot.SL11 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS

I feel like they [students] should complain because how can we improve? SL11 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS

Quality assurance should be there for education, basically higher education, it should be there otherwise the standard will go down, quality assurance, the way that UWE has interviews, their processes I think I am satisfied very good, I can recommend a student to come and do the course here because well maintained.SL12

standard should be maintained otherwise it's pointless having a degree so the quality, the standard should be maintained otherwise anybody come in, can do this thing and go out, there is no standard actually to get a degree you have to go through certain barriers come up from that then you will know how to cope with that society, what you do in the job also. SL12

I'm happy with the programmes running here, the way the exams are conducted and the what do you call the security taken to secure the papers, not [0:13:14.7] but the way that we do here and then we are doing the scanning and all those things only myself will be there, that we won't put it out, the exam board lose confidential things are kept confidential, we take all the necessary steps to do that, that is the main thing. SL12

so when it comes to quality assurance I know staff at SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER they mark in a certain way and knowing the level and knowing the standard of students, they mark in a separate way and we send it to the UWE and when they have their students separately and they SLHEI1 students separately I think it's getting a bit compare with UKHEI students and Sri Lankan students and knowing that we have average level of students here not very high class or low class but in the average level so now when it comes to that point I think UKHEI is comparing our students with their students of course happening and that moment I think off like you know and I'm uncertain because UKHEI they might not know the level of students and they might because they aren't very good in English, they aren't very good in writing, may be.SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

involved basically with three programmes, overseeing those, making sure data was coming through from them at an appropriate time, doing all the data entry and processing the exam boards as well as forwarding queries and questions and making sure everything was done in accordance with UKHEI regs for the exam boards particularly. UK01

attend to ensure that all quality assurance processes are fully covered and that the process of the board is also correctly done, so in line with UKHEI regulations UK02 SENIOR PROFESSION SERVICES

Some of the challenges that we faced are things around sometimes particularly approaching boards things coming in late or things coming in and not being clear. That's been an issue in terms of us being certain about the data that we're getting. UK02 SENIOR PROFESSION SERVICES

Because a lot of our process is quite admin heavy and we're bound by the system that we use, the IT system, so lots of things take a lot longer than people might imagine because there is also steps that we have to follow in the system. UK02 SENIOR PROFESSION SERVICES

thinking about what would be done here to ensure that they're treated equally, the students who are studying at UKHEI, so the outcome was based on those decisions. UK02 SENIOR PROFESSION SERVICES

I felt that they recognized what we were trying to do and what we were trying to maintain and were willing to do what needed to be done to make that happen, so I don't think so. UK02 SENIOR PROFESSION SERVICES

elements of quality assurance mostly or most of my time at least was spent around getting the assessments right and then getting the marking of those assessment right. UK05

I think what worked well is probably the will of people really. I think on kind of both sides of... both sides the world, if you like, there was a real will from SLHEI1 to try and get us you know accurately and marked work and then well devised assessments and try and present them to us in a timely manner, UK05

it's probably not their perception that's at fault, and if there are concerns over standards then actually they might well be rooted in something else be it the fact that it is more difficult to look at these programmes in Sri Lanka or just be a lack of experience compared to UK providers, or a lack of Governments or framework compared to UK providers. UK05

where they do the assessment basically, that is what they are, they have been monitored on, they will ask us to moderate their assessments, whether it is exams or course work. We try to make sure that the levels of their assessment match the levels we are practicing here at UKHEI, especially for the modules which are running in parallel and if there is any... any concerns about the standards of their assessment or how the marking is being conducted then we do step in and request that they ask the... modify it to match our standards. UK07

quality assurance takes lots of different forms. The official form is the process of along the line assuring that any quality issues are handled. UK08

the point at which the UK Module Leader, double marks, or second marks the work of the SLHEI1 Module Leader and often that's when issues would arise. UK08

more often it is then about the process of diagnosing what went wrong and for instance, then I could follow that up and when I was out at SLHEI1 then I would go and see – especially because the visits for SLHEI1 were timed to coincide with much of this moderation process – then I could have meetings with the relevant staff, and perhaps present copies of work from UK students and talk about what was required. UK08

quality issues arose where the partnership Module Leader had rather a different idea about what they were teaching than what the UK Module Leader had expected. So checking their knowledge and checking their perceptions of the module and what it should look like and what they should be doing. UK08

I really think quality assurance is you know top of the list or thereabouts because at the end of the day these degrees have UKHEI's name on them, you know UK05

To be honest the people who work at SLHEI1 were mainly without any kind of experience [of the quality assurance process]. So I don't know really if they have experience that they will implement things like they do here. But I think with the right guidance from the University of the West of England we manage to get them to a point where they will be implementing the same response to correspondence as we do. So I think you cannot come up with a conclusion because most of the members of staff we have there were new to the jobs. UK09

[Our quality systems requirements] they accept it but I don't know if they agree with it. But I think at the end what they do they accept what we say. So in many occasions they don't even try to argue the point. So if we say as an example the mark of these modules are very high and we suggest to

downgrade them by 10% or by 15% based on what we do here – based on the marks that we give our student and they just say yes without providing any kind of argument for their initial marking UK09

So you have already alluded to leadership, staff exchange so I would go along with those as being directly linked to how the processes are conducted with the partner and the idea that they comply because they have to comply as opposed to they do it because they want to do it and trying to work out how you get from one position to the other is what I am kind of looking at. UK10 SENIOR MANAGEMENT/LEADER

Yeah, so I have to understand what the university's policies are, what our regulations are, what the QAA want us to do and why we have developed the policies we are and then actually implement them and evidence them, make sure that they're happening and that we're doing what we need to do. UK12 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Our quality assurance requirements are in the assessment cycle policy. So they're in there. They're in the QMEF, the quality and management enhancement framework, they're written down in there. They're within our academic regulations, they're in... and then obviously the QAA guidance. So we have several different places to refer to, to understand what we're doing. UK12 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

I think communication is incredibly critical, building up a relationship that's open and that's two way. I think if you can have that communication and have exchanges with people where you are honest and nobody feels threatened, nobody feels they have to be defensive, then I think you can get your quality in place, you can say to people, 'I've written this but I don't think it's – I would do it like this, would you do it like that?' You can have those kind of dialogues and exchanges that means you're getting appropriate assessments, that you can evidence that well because you can say to someone okay right, now we'll write down what we've had discussions about and we're quite clear and we're quite open about it. UK12 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Risks to quality

if the financials are that tight then I don't think you've necessarily got the right partner UK06 ACADEMIC/TNE DEVELOPMENT

we running with limited staff and because initially we can't have a lot of lecturers because it is not practical with the cost and all these things. SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

I always thought that for something so big and with so many students involved, and it also carries such a high amount of business risk, perhaps more resource should have been put in its dire always thought that from the faculty at least more... more time could have been devoted or more resource could've gone into it and perhaps from the academic services or admin point of view there should have been far more emphasis on continuous improvement, things like that UK05

Also sometimes the staff might leave the existing staff, they migrate most of the time. We have raised this, they migrate and they go for other jobs, so staff retention also. So again when new delegates come every year the staff training is not a redundant activity because it's a set of new faces so that way we also face difficulties. SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS ADMINISTRATOR

maintaining quality can be difficult because we have process maybe even here sometime we running with limited staff and because initially we can't have a lot of lecturers because it is not practical with the cost and all these things. SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

finding that good lecturers can also be difficult SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

We struggled because there have been a number of staff turnovers, people know it and then they stay here for one year and then they leave and a new person comes, he will take one or two years to get into the system, know all these things and then there won't be anybody to transfer that knowledge quickly and efficiently to the people that are coming. SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS SENIOR MANAGER/LEADER

you need to have stability here and if you don't have that stability in the staff we will struggle SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS SENIOR MANAGER/LEADER

if the people are getting changed and whenever there is a change that is going to affect the student.SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS SENIOR MANAGER/LEADER

you need to have the stability it's not the quality of the lecturer but how you adopt to the system, it is very important. SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS SENIOR MANAGER/LEADER

stability would be very important and that stability will create or bring all the lecturers in to a system and if you have a system it is very easy for you to run a programme SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS SENIOR MANAGER/LEADER

SLHEI1 should be trained by UWE and once you reach the stability and when you start delivering with the same quality, with the same standards for UWE then you can actually compare.SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS SENIOR MANAGER/LEADER

I think with more staff we can handle. SL12

I noticed distinct periods where there were differences in quality and I think that coincided with changeovers of staff, so would get marks that were late, we'd get information that was late. There would be work we'd need adjustment. UK01

There was much more of a solid presence and a lot of continuity with SLHEI1 and that shifted as people left and new people took over and as a degree of an experience and I think that led to decline in terms of what we were expecting,UK01

that wasn't a clear understanding of the quality we were after, I think some people within the organisation had a better idea than others perhaps but I think that there was some expertise lost and people who were working there when I first took over that had a much more responsive, much greater clarity of understanding in terms of what we were looking for, that was lost when they left. I think there's a great deal of cultural capital, academic capital perhaps, that was lost. UK01

some of the staff that again took over that didn't have as much experience or insight in terms of what we were looking for. I think that impacted things significantly in terms of assessment work that was coming in late or marks that diverged quite significantly from what the suggestions were that came back from the academic feedback that we had here.UK01

the consistency is very difficult to maintain, partly because historically they were hiring the services of some practising engineers who are not experienced in education so they... each individual would bring in his or her own expertise in the industry and do not take consideration of what the higher education standards are so they are applying different standards when it comes to providing assessment or marking it. UWE07

Basically as the Programme Lead, I'm mainly so if we start with the exam papers I'm setting and all these things, so we have operation plan and we normally look at at the start of the semester we say okay on this, this, and these dates you have to give the course work, you have to get the paper. And sometimes like if I feel they have kind of have too much workload I'm not going to chase much,

because then will also feel I've been chasing, chasing, chasing, kind of things. But I will give some reminders and paper, normally I kind of go through the paper, how easy and how good it is. Sometimes I can't understand...SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

They're making more work for us, to be very honest, because the timeframe – sometimes we are busy with our own end of year and starting a new year so we end up doing the records and the reports. The time that is there for it is a bit tight and we're a bit flustered with time but we do understand the need for it. I think this time we did it all on time! SL03

The degree that is recognised is your degree, it's not what we are doing here, so whether we have the same quality or not that's the main risk we are having, whether we can maintain the same standard or not, whether we can be in par with each other of our under own circumstances, like let's say our own proper channel bodies. (Pause) That-that's what I see as the main risk. SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

Well it's like this now, I don't know if it's good to say here and now(pause). This er... still we're at this starting stage, only at 3 years or 4 years something like that, but still even the staff here knows that there is this process, and sometimes what happens here is we don't have much time to adhere to all of these things because we have only three of us in the civil engineering staff right now. SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

we all are human we also can make some mistakes, so when we- when we are setting the exam paper even though we are subject expertise that sometimes the others might not be able to understand what I've told. So those other things that we are going to look at when we're do the moderation, and sometimes even though I'm the subject expertise sometimes I may also have made a mistake there; I may have missed the data because basically when I'm setting the paper I am in it and I'm writing answers, sometimes I might have missed the data that I have given to the student. So when someone else is looking at that, he can pick that up. So basically I feel it is really good to have moderation process even at the two levels, even at two sets of levels. SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

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So basically even though we know the process, sometimes we can't adhere to that process because of the limited time with all the others, and based on this now. SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

sometimes basically we have to give other main focus group teaching students when it comes to teaching and marking, we know we have to fill the forms, and we have to go through all the forms and all these kinds of things, but in this as I told you we are finding it difficult with the time.SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

have someone else to make sure the college like prepares these forms and all those things, then it would have been kind of better, a bit. SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

Sometimes it's kind of hard for us to adhere with the process there, that's the problem we are having, but I think it will be okay with time when we have more staff.SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

marking has always been you know, tight because the deadlines are a bit tough but it has been manageable so far. SL8 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS

we set the academic calendar first so from the beginning I think we set all of our deadlines, we set our targets, what to be achieved and everything but in the process I think we fell behind for certain deadlines and it is nothing to do with miscommunication or less communication I believe it's something to do with the workload balance for us SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS SENIOR MANAGER/LEADER

Very very difficult to work in a short period for uploads and all, very difficult.SL12

Actually the problem, the timeframes,SL12

it's much more the small size of the team and the amount of work that's coming in and the ability to grow significantly the volume of partners that we're working with and the number of students overall, and ultimately I don't think the team is big enough to be able to cope with those demands. UK01

I thing again it comes back to academic administrative split between the registrar and support she has and whoever's working with her in terms of... or whoever may be doing the role, and what sort of support they're giving and training they're giving and also the understanding they have of UKHEI's processes and what we expect from them but I think there probably needs to be a great deal of support given to people because it's quite specialist knowledge and I think that it requires a certain sort of set of skills to get your head round it, particularly from an administrative point of view. UK01

from my point of view I always thought perhaps there was a bit of a disconnect between the amount of time that was allocated to marking and looking at assessments for international partner and the amount of time it actually took. UK05

perhaps the amount of workload bundles that were assigned to markers and tutors here, the support they give, I think while we had a good relationship with SLHEI1, or from my sort of... the area we had a good relationship, I think it is possibly always going to be slightly more complicated than marking work in the UK. UK05

In terms of UKHEI issues there is this thing about workload which each module leader is supposed to have but the amount of work which module leaders is supposed to give in order to give justice to the role, to the quality monitoring, the amount of time is much more than what is being offered at present and therefore it was very difficult with the link tutor to put pressure on the module leaders to deliver on time UK07

there is no incentive for the module leader to put on the effort to put in there for which is required.UK07

I think to a certain extent we did a lot of that [staff development]. The issue is we have to repeat it all the time because the member of staff keeps changing. I think in the last two years it's getting better because we have more stability in terms of staff and so on. UK09

I think with partners, they are different, they have different amounts of experience in delivering higher education. Some of them have worked with partners in a kind of UK framework before, others haven't.UK12 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

There's a very good team of people there doing the academic side. There's people doing the day to day administration. We don't have any high level administrative roles so to say, at SLHEI1, which makes it quite difficult to develop things. You can do the, this needs to be done, this box needs to be ticked, but you can't develop or improve I would say. UK12 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

we need to repeat, repeat, repeat, repeat, repeat, the information for it to go in and get done. That's the hard thing. I think that's why there's no moving on because you're always going back and doing things you know that you've covered before. UK12 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

I feel that academics – some do it quite well, some seem unable to communicate within the university, let alone outside of the university and it is a struggle. UK12 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

maybe the types of courses that we run that you don't communicate necessarily in the same way that a psychologist would communicate or something like that. I don't know, a software engineer just doesn't talk in the same way. I don't know. But there definitely seems to be a reluctance to do it [UWE academic staff] and I think that's something that has to be overcome if the faculty wants its TNE to expand, we need to start... it's time, it's a cultural shift, it's a different way of working, and I think we've seen it in other parts of the university, it was like that there and now they're way more open to it, they're far more open to the idea of actually talking to people, picking up the phone, picking up Skype, WhatsApp, Facetime and whatever. They're far, far more open to it. UK12 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Working relationships

very much respect what our partnership institutions are doing and that they are often very progressive for their environment and that actually the people there are often very educated; have industry experience so I think that helped to kind of think of people as your equal and I think it helped to have social interactions UK 08

It can be really helpful if we've got a link tutor who is the face of that [inaudible 0: 09:56.4] who can almost help us move that over and go out and spread that word and perhaps give them advance warning that it's going to be happening. Also almost the door knocking go, have you seen that's come in, could you please have a look at that, we know it's a bit tight and it's not ideal, but that's what we're dealing with, we've got to try and be ready for the board. UK01

it just makes it so much easier for the team when they've got that good working relationship, because at times where things are a bit challenging. If they have that positive work relationship pulling through they don't feel that awkward about speaking to that link tutor and going, oh gosh this happened or I'm really sorry I've just realized we've overlooked this or this has come in later that we'd hoped even though we've been chasing, but they've got that open dialogue already that makes the difficult conversations easier to have. UK01

Also recognize that the partner might be looking at things quite differently to us and not just from a point of view of coming from a different institution, but culturally as well and that we need to recognize that they might have different demands on them than us. UK01

when you have all these interactions, expecting that there aren't any changes in this half I think we will believe that confidence between the two partners and then that flow will be very smooth and of course you are going to have the right people at the right places otherwise you win the trust and then you can't just let it go away you need to make sure that you keep that trust. SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS SENIOR MANAGER/LEADER

We have very much a culture of supporting and developing in our team, but it does mean that we have people come and go. UK01

[link tutors] It is very varied and it's really noticeable to me, particularly my role where I work across all the partners and then working across all of the team I really see that some of my team benefit from a different style of link tutor than others. It really makes a difference to how they are able to do their work. It's really useful if we have a really good working relationship with the link tutor because they are our contact within the faculty UK01

I think acknowledging and respecting the other opinion is important in developing this level of relationship. So when I question something and I get the professional answer that impresses me that this person knows what she is doing, and likewise when she throw things at my end and she gets a professional answer. So this establishes the trust. UK07

I think patience and persistence are the two watch words I would probably use with them and that's kind of gently reminding people when things need to be done, but also being persistent enough to escalate that if need be, to get people involved who can actually have more direct communication with people who are higher up in that kind of structure. UK01

Definitely being able to communicate and have open communications with colleagues. Also like I touched on before, having quite clear and succinct communications, I think we've certainly had an experience with a team member before where they had lots and lots of long draw out email conversations trying – I think it's much better if we can be quite clear on what we need because at the end of the day we particularly are quite process driven. We need certain things at certain times, we need certain things to happen so we need to be clear in what we're asking so that people can answer those questions and not let our process get lost. I think communication is absolutely essential. UK02
SENIOR PROFESSION SERVICES

Interpersonal skills. Yeah I think you have to be very prompt as well. Your response for any communication first of all will be quick. Also need to be more – I don't know how to say it just be more conscientious. UK03

Attention to details UK03

Yeah I guess it's about cultural sensitivity. I don't know. I would call it [inaudible 0:16:07.3] cultural sophistication, but that sounds quite elitist. It's about being open to understanding, and empathy I guess cultural empathy that not the rest of the world does things in the way that we happen to do them here in Bristol and in fact celebrating that I think is where it really works. There is a degree of – I was going to say persistence, but I'm not sure that I'm just talking about UKHEI systems now, whether there is something more common around kind of TNE engagement, it requires a greater degree of patience. UK04 SENIOR MANAGEMENT/LEADER

pro-activity would possibly be.... be top of the list. I think I have always been quite a pro-active person and I think it's that willingness to try and engage with people... try and engage with people repeatedly maybe, you know I have always been quite not afraid to chase people necessarily and not afraid to kind of ask the questions, and I think there is an element of that simply needing to be done I think. UK05

I think and I don't know if this is unique to international collaboration but unless you are persistent with people things tend to drop off people's radars quite quickly. And I suppose it is more difficult when you can't necessarily walk down the hallway to their office and have a chat with them about it or pick up the phone and have a chat with them about it straight away. UK05

So yeah I think persistence and pro-activity kind of starts and I think that perhaps gets people on board with you a little bit as well if they see that you are prepared to kind of, you know, keep asking the awkward questions and keep letting people know what their deadlines are, even if that might

irritate them slightly to start with. I think people get used to that actually they probably quiet appreciate it after... after a certain amount of time. UK05

perhaps it's a little bit cheeky of me to be pushing this now, but I suppose my own personality is kind of learning from that experience that actually you know if I don't push the issue here there is a real risk that this won't be ready for this time and that's going to have a knock-on effect on an examination board and potentially the student getting their marks on time. UK05

problem solving and attitude towards problem solving that doesn't say oh we've got to stop this because it's got problems, it's a case of right we've got a problem what are we going to do about it? So a positive attitude. UK06 ACADEMIC/TNE DEVELOPMENT

Ability to convey confidence, I think you need to give people the belief that they can trust you to make something right within... within your scope or being... an honesty that there are somethings you might not be able to solve. UK06 ACADEMIC/TNE DEVELOPMENT

I think diplomacy is beneficial in every aspect of life. UK07

Trying to deliver the message in a nice way without insulting the other party will produce better results than abrupt and direct approach so that's an inter-personal skill which I don't claim I have but I have seen other colleagues doing it better than me. UK07

I think they [SLHEI2] also take it as a point of pride that they've got such a strong tie with UKHEI and the wards I've been involved with is that they seem to be very reflective in terms of their bettering the partnership and bettering their delivery of the subjects and they're very much... the feedback I've got from them is effectively that they've really benefited themselves, it's changed the way they do things, it's improved their practice and that they constantly look to do that. They have an academic culture there, a professional culture, where they seem very, very focused on that kind of improvement and delivery. UK01

[differences in quality] I don't know that there is. I think that a lot of problems occur are more around the details. Actually when we try to find a solution, I have found that SLHEI1 have been willing to agree to what we propose as a solution based on quality or student experience. UK02 SENIOR PROFESSION SERVICES

I think there are obviously differences in working practices, but that also can come across academic institutions within the same country. UK01

So with lessons I've learned from SLHEI1 and working with other partners, has been to really just keep on the ball in terms of deadlines, even though they've got copies of, for example, the operational calendar and they know broadly when stuff is coming up, I think it's key to be a presence, always be there just gently reminding them from time to time that things need doing or making requests but also acting diligently to help them out and part of my successes have been basically working with partners and being very responsive. UK01

I think the victories I've had with it I think is actually getting things through the process to the end point, which is getting the students to the point where they're getting their reward and they get the opportunity to graduate or everything has happened in enough time where we've been able to get quite tight situations resolved so the students are not disadvantaged. UK01

I think working in a supported way but also having people who can say, "Actually, no, this needs to be done now," kind of thing, and really pushing things forward has really helped. UK01

where it's had a very shaky start and it's gradually improving and there are people who are now really beginning to see what we want in terms of the partnership and also see how it benefits them and actually saying, "We will do this and this", and that's been helpful to us and again it's that kind of

point of seeing the way things are done at UKHEI and it's something that's beneficial to them in terms of it's improving that academic services, improving the student experiences, improving them as an organisation. I think that's key. UK01

The things that make for a successful partnership from our perspective, from having it operationally working well I mean like you say we've already touched a lot on communication, but it's about clear communication both ways. It's about us providing them with clear guidance at the beginning. It's about the initial training and understanding of what they need to do. UK02 SENIOR PROFESSION SERVICES

The ones where we have a really good working relationship with a link tutor makes a massive, massive difference, you know really is key to the smooth running of the operational side because – and the ones that really communicate with us if they are not sure about something perhaps pop and see us or ring us and have a conversation with us because things can get lost in email, but the link tutors to understand where we are coming from and how we might need things to progress. UK02 SENIOR PROFESSION SERVICES

You know it's very difficult to go in at the beginning, oh you've done this all wrong when you're marking, but working together to go – and also looking about the outcomes and then thinking about okay the students didn't perform as well as say the UKHEI equivalent, so what do we think wasn't as good? Do they need more feedback at a different stage? UK02 SENIOR PROFESSION SERVICES

Generally speaking, after so many years now, everything worked out quite well. Especially due to the staff at the SLHEI1 end they were dedicated in their work. The work they produce normally, there is not much to correct about. UK03

I always thought that for something so big and with so many students involved, and it also carries such a high amount of business risk, perhaps more resource should have been put in its direction, UK05

Perhaps that is another thing that actually people from the IT services or business improvement, things like that, could spend more time looking at and making our relationships... our day to day relations with the partners slightly smoother than they are just through looking at some of our system processors and procedures and saying actually we can do this completely differently, saving ourselves time and making it easier for the partner. UK05

working with the partner to ensure the preparation of documentation that's required by the institution, helping them to understand the requirements and liaising with the team back home to make sure that everything was prepared, dates were ok, the panel worked as appropriate and then working UK06 ACADEMIC/TNE DEVELOPMENT

the communication between the two lots of module leaders would be an aspect of quality assurance. And actually I think a lot of where there wasn't a lot of contact was more to do with the UK Module Leader than it was to do with the partnership Module Leader, UK08

Equal partners in every sense. How should I say? They always respect our decisions also, all the time. And a UWE decision about the student, or about the process, or activity, I would say that it was equal. SL03

think their guidance we are on equal levels because they are very similar to us actually I mean ... and we listen to them because it's their syllabus, like we had to learn what they want and exactly what they are expecting but concerns like I think we have been in equal positions and there are some situations we are sometimes we agree without knowing like 'why do we agree to that?' That has to be a bit transparent sometimes. SL8 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS

So according to my experience yes both parties respect each other because ... so when you're going to come to moderation [the link tutor] never force anything so you can increase this mark ok it is like that it is just a suggestion] so she always value our ... ok, academic knowledge and it is like that because of that with the relationship that I have with link tutor that I feel it is equal so.SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

we value each other, we talk things, sometimes we are a bit driven by UWE because we get all the material, we get all the assignment brief, we get all the papers and then I don't think if we get assignment, even if we set assignment brief and they know learning outcomes very well, they have been teaching for a long time and it is a few years in Northshore so I don't find it is wrong but still we are driven by UWE.SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

I think we have a good mutual understanding between UKHEI and SLHEI1.SL03

It's kind of remembering that these are our counterparts and they are our colleagues and we are working with them. I think that's really important as well, that people have a respect and understanding of the roles they are able in their organizations.UK01

I think that's a sign of a good working relationship that both ways the communication is done in a – try to be proactive, kind of be understanding and in a positive way and in a professionally courteous way as well because we recognize that she's under a lot of pressure, busy. I think she recognizes it's the same for us and so we try to respect each other and be personable, but equally clear in our communications. UK01

I have to be critical here, what I have noticed that some of our module leaders they look down at their counterparts at SLHEI1 as if they are not to the same standard. We have, my view, we have to look at them as equals and maybe we are privileged that we have received some training which they haven't received yet so we have to take that into consideration when we handle their work, but we shouldn't at all look down at them that we are better. No we are not. In fact from the quality of... or the standard of assessment the questions and course work they set for their students, I personally learned from it sometimes. Sometimes I borrow some of their course sheets. UK07

an assumption that their background, their educational background of their partners is not so good and that yeah, I think there are a lot of assumptions and they didn't really need to try and find out anything about the people they're working with.UK08

Yes, it's good because [name] is always responsive. Whenever I send an email we tend to... whatever it is he replies normally whether it can be done or, 'I will see to it', that's okay because then I know okay he got the message. That's okay.SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

there are some lecturers UWE module leaders who respond to e-mails like very quickly within like 5-10 minutes especially [name] and even [name] – they're really supportive. Erm sometimes there have been issues as in like sometimes there are urgent situations and if the response gets like 2 or 3 days delayed it has been a problem like the field board we couldn't finalise the [s.l. UOP 0:29:02.7] marks because everyone was out of office or something SL8 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS

when I drop her an e-mail she may be get back to me within one hour - she's that responsive SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

The communication is quite well, it's actually whenever we write to [name] or [name] about administrative stuff we get a lot of help, yeah when it comes to module leaders we get prompt sometimes it's not because they have their own schedules, the problem is sometime we don't know whether they are on leave or not, we will e-mail them and we are waiting and we think ok he, but he

was on leave and it may be the same case for here so when it comes to their e-mail, we are on holiday then we not know so if there's a small thing about. SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

extensive contact with their registrar on quite a regular occurrence UK01

So with lessons I've learned from SLHEI1 and working with other partners, has been to really just keep on the ball in terms of deadlines, even though they've got copies of, for example, the operational calendar and they know broadly when stuff is coming up, I think it's key to be a presence, always be there just gently reminding them from time to time that things need doing or making requests but also acting diligently to help them out and part of my successes have been basically working with partners and being very responsive. UK01

I think they [SLHEI2] also take it as a point of pride that they've got such a strong tie with UKHEI and the wards I've been involved with is that they seem to be very reflective in terms of their bettering the partnership and bettering their delivery of the subjects and they're very much... the feedback I've got from them is effectively that they've really benefited themselves, it's changed the way they do things, it's improved their practice and that they constantly look to do that. They have an academic culture there, a professional culture, where they seem very, very focused on that kind of improvement and delivery. UK01

I felt frustrated at times at the way that we get information from them or the lack of information sometimes, but I've never felt that it was due to a lack of wanting to do it. I just felt sometimes there is a lack of detail with the administrative processes which then knocks on to us. UK01

every year there was an improvement because of the links we had with the programme leaders there with all the visits we had and so on. And I thought that actually it was getting better when we moved to the new programme. UK09

The change of staff has a big impact on the progress of the institution because you have to deal with new people every single day asking for their CVs and getting to know them and get to know who's who and so on. And sometimes there was this lack of communication. They make a change, but we are not aware of it. UK09

I think from the lecturer point from our side is to try always to treat them as equal. So to be equal so he is programme leader here – he is a programme leader in SLHEI1. You are kind of programme leader in here although you are linked tutor. And try to be like, as I said before, is to be on the same level. Not to be bossy and also to try to understand the culture of the country. UK09

you need to help colleagues at the partner institution to understand why the university has policies and procedures in place, why it has its oversight and what it means and what the value is of that and how that can then benefit their institution and individuals within the institution. UK11 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Engage regularly at different levels and foster a culture of respect and understanding of collegiality. I think one of the key pitfalls is just expecting things to happen from myself but a relationship needs to be worked on a number of levels, it's something that won't go away, it's something that needs to be nurtured to be fostered on a daily basis. Relationships are about the human beings that are involved within them so it's about maintaining that, it's about owning trust, it's about demonstrating the credibility, it's about ensuring that you deliver on your policies, keep the wheels greased at it were. UK11 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

You have to have the emotional intelligence to react and to develop and nurture relationships that kind of go beyond just the other primary aspect of your role whether it be academic or operational. It's all about emotional intelligence I think. And I have seen some unbelievably impressive people from an

academic point of view or from an administrative point of view who technically are really good at particular aspects of their role but they've floundered within working within a partnership context because they don't have the kind of soft skills; the people side of things. UK11 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

It's a question of how you nurture that and how you teach that and I think exposure to kind of seeing others being involved in it and kind of witnessing best practice and invest in it. UK11 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

I still think there's quite a lot of work that needs to be done at our institution in terms of front end academic things so kind of a hand over induction training and mentoring of staff who take on responsibility for a partnership or undertake this work for the first time. UK11 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Patience certainly helps in many occasions. I think organisation actually is really key to what these guys do, knowing what's coming up, what's happening, being able to do it across multiple different partners, with multiple different kind of years and calendars and things going on. Just knowing how to organise, how to plan and prepare. Being able to prioritise different things because things don't always happen when they're supposed to happen and you will get an emergency and something will change and you have to respond to that with an idea as well, with a plan of how am I going to deal with this, what am I going to do. UK12 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

When we get a new member of staff we go through a kind of week' long induction, we will take them through what the different types of collaborative provision we offer at UKHEI are and try and explain that to them. We will talk about very much starting off with non... everything is non-standard here is our kind of approach, don't think about one way of doing it, there's a lot of different ways of doing it. We like to try and get across that there isn't a right or wrong, there's not necessarily like I say, one way, it's not right, it's not wrong, it's just different and varieties can be good in this team. That's part of their kind of induction. UK12 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

If we offer intercultural communication training to people as well, the university runs quite a good course on that, so if people wish to they can go on that. UK12 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

It's again [intercultural communication] about that idea I think that there are different cultures that exist across the world, they're not necessarily at a natural level, they might be at an organisational level, our team level, there are ways of working. It talks about cultures, what that is, what that means in terms of people's beliefs and how it can translate down into people's behaviours and their attitudes towards things. UK12 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Staff exchanges, visits, socialisation

That was really about them getting out there, experiencing it, seeing it first hand so that when we are at that point of resource planning and resource challenges and quality assurance challenges it's not thought of as something in the abstract, but they know the people. UK04 SENIOR MANAGEMENT/LEADER

And again when there are visitors from UWE they always ensure that they speak to the students so that student feedback is again reported to the management in North Shore, so we have to... like er the quality circle is maintained that way so that it is improved and certain facilities are given. SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS ADMINISTRATOR

I very much respect what our partnership institutions are doing and that they are often very progressive for their environment and that actually the people there are often very educated; have

industry experience so I think that helped to kind of think of people as your equal and I think it helped to have social interactions UK08

although we say we try to maintain the same quality, maybe in the Sri Lankan context it's not possible to obtain the same because- and again, cultural differences. Because I have visited UK UWE, so I know how it is, like even the canteens, the student areas and everything, of course they charge a higher price but it's different. SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS ADMINISTRATOR

Yeah, face to face. Just comes twice a year and that helps, and we've also had meetings with the staff, with head of school, and the students, interacting with students with subject content and lectures, and so on. And to be frank I think they have very good communication with the link tutor, which helps. SL3/04

then we had G [visit] he was really helpful for us, and when we were discussing about this marking off the project reports and all these things it was really helpful for me, and it was easy to discuss about things like this, and he personally said about this er... we had several conferences as well at that time, so for those things it was easy, it was easier. SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

Because I have visited UK UWE, so I know how it is, like even the canteens, the student areas and everything, of course they charge a higher price but it's different. And in Sri Lanka maybe the students don't get the same environment sometimes, SL5 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

And again when there are visitors from UWE they always ensure that they speak to the students so that student feedback is again reported to the management in North Shore, so we have to... like er the quality circle is maintained that way so that it is improved and certain facilities are given. SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS ADMINISTRATOR

So come in and have a conversation and have a workshop, I think, that is good to maintain the quality, and lecturers also have the feeling that they're having that link with UWE. So this is not an isolated institute in Sri Lanka. So they have that responsibility to maintain the quality and the standard and they have a job here to... with the self-satisfaction also that it's good because they feel that their working environment is maintain standards of a certain level, so that is a good feeling for the lecturers. SL906

At the moment like the basic communication that we use is via e-mail so and I have joined ... I have been her for the past six months and we have had three workshops with UWE; I think there are visits and even we met the Vice Chancellor once. So I think from the side of UWE visits it's adequate because anybody needs support somebody is coming up but I would probably think like if some people can go and see how other works in UWE as well. SL8 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS

She's tough, she's tough like she would send the pre-moderation sample and she would say you are late but still that is a motivation you know you get to work because she asks for it all the time, I like working with her. SL8 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS

here we have communication all the time we have the staff development programmes and we have constant visits from UWE but at the time same sometimes you can have some lecturers who are going to be here for about one year, one academic year and then there are other lecturers who are thorough in their academic programme in the parent university so I am not sure that type of arrangement can be it's gonna cost. SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS SENIOR MANAGER/LEADER

For UWE I think for the moment we don't have that type of interaction with the students and then at least now when let's say you bring a good lecturer from UWE and if somebody can at least do a lecture it could be a guest lecture on one topic and then if we can have some arrangements SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS SENIOR MANAGER/LEADER

when UWE person comes sometimes they [students] open their mouth and they say 'ok this lecturer he's not very good' or 'that lecturer is not right'. SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS SENIOR MANAGER/LEADER

he was not responding or there had been some issues, it doesn't mean that he was bad but he then generally absolved the system and then he knew what this expected and then I saw huge improvement and then he had visits to Northshore and they know what we are doing and when you have that bit of [pauses] I would say mistrust, but when you don't have, you will not have the full confidence if you sometimes don't see things by yourself SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS SENIOR MANAGER/LEADER

when you have all these interactions, expecting that there aren't any changes in this half I think we will believe that confidence between the two partners and then that flow will be very smooth and of course you are going to have the right people at the right places otherwise you win the trust and then you can't just let it go away you need to make sure that you keep that trust. SL11 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS0

[Visit to UK?]Yeah, we talk to them and we see how things happening there and yeah we get to know if we can go there also.SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS SENIOR MANAGER/LEADER

UWE's always having an idea what's happening in Northshore but Northshore doesn't have visitors there. I think it might help because when you go there and you see how things are happening, how lectures are going, how students are participating, how students are addressed I think. SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

I think not everybody but the leading people may be [Executive Dean], programme leaders.SL13

We can see all the resources, how things happening, how the students are engaged in things.SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

Yeah, I would, we have met the associate leader, we have met [link tutor] here, we haven't meet any module leader person to person we just write on e-mail and we get back. Then actually we try to match their standard, like you know we are not thinking our standard is this, in my department we always try to, ok if they're setting the standard we try to reach that value or reach that standard.SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER

[benefits of a visit?] It's difficult to say because my relationship was focused predominantly on one person. I'm not sure that I can really make a guess on the impact of actually being able to meet face to face and go there in person, particularly as it pertains to my particular role, which is more of a facilitator between people who have actually been academic staff, for example, in one organisation or another. UWE01

that was due to understand significant problems and a mis match between expectations from an administrative point of view at the partners' end and our end, that it really needed direct hands-on experience for someone to actually go and say, "Look, this is what we need." UWE01

I don't think in SLHEI's case it ever got to a problem that couldn't be resolved either through a member of academic staff being present. I don't think my presence would necessarily have actually made much of a difference. My inkling is the issues were much more of an academic level than an administrative one, so I don't really think it would have made much of a difference. UWE 01

for them to have maybe more collaboration or an exchange perhaps between people from... because obviously we send people out to SLHEI but it might also be beneficial for people to come here as well and see how we do things at UKHEI and actually get hands-on and sit down and meet with people from all across the people that interface with them as an organisation to actually see how we work and what our expectations are in person. I think that could be useful. UWE 01

I think maybe the newer members of staff could certainly do with that [visit UK]. UK01

where it's had a very shaky start and it's gradually improving and there are people who are now really beginning to see what we want in terms of the partnership and also see how it benefits them and actually saying, "We will do this and this", and that's been helpful to us and again it's that kind of point of seeing the way things are done at UKHEI and it's something that's beneficial to them in terms of it's improving that academic services, improving the student experiences, improving them as an organisation. I think that's key. UK01

I would think with any visit to any partner I'd want to know that we had a clear idea of what that was going to achieve. UK02 SENIOR PROFESSION SERVICES

We in the past had one of our administrators go out to visit one of our partners. I personally didn't think that was very successful – not successful, you know it was interesting for her, but in terms of I have to think about what value is that adding to that relationship and what value is that adding to the partner and I don't think it really achieved that. UK02 SENIOR PROFESSION SERVICES

I think we would have to be very clear on any visits what we wanted to achieve from the visit and not just go with quite a vague plan of, oh wouldn't it be nice to visit? Yeah it was nice for her to visit and she had a great experience, but I haven't seen that translate into any improvement in the way that we work with that particular partner. UK02 SENIOR PROFESSION SERVICES

I haven't seen the way they communicate with us has improved at all. I think any visits that we do need to

I think much as if we had an endless budget I'd love to send all my administrators out to meet their administrators, but We need to be really clear what we hope to achieve from these visits and if there are any that it's time and money well spent and that we actually see something delivered as a result of that. UK02 SENIOR PROFESSION SERVICES

Again the same thing if we felt that there was a clear objective, if we felt that Priyanthi coming over would help her understand some things that we need to work with her on, so if it's about her [and some 0:26:59.0] of our processes then yes. Again I would want to have a clear plan as to what we hoped that would achieve because a visit for the sake of a visit is very lovely, but at the end of the day we need to be focused on making sure that we get the most out of that and it actually makes a difference to the day to day work that we're doing with that partner. There has to be a clear plan. UK02 SENIOR PROFESSION SERVICES

I feel so beneficial after talking to students. For me I learn I just really – I know exactly the system there how it works. Talking to a couple of staff, I talk to three staff and they're really fun, Well it's different from if you just email. I didn't even hear their voice before UK02 SENIOR PROFESSION SERVICES

If their staff then come here to join our lecture and talk to our students then it can enhance their experience, but provide there is the money allowed. The cost is quite a lot. UK03

I think they need to know how our system works. UK03

For example here we tend to give students more choices, more freedom to do things UK03

I think we've got a situation where we're getting a lot more out of their visits here and our visits there where in terms of the staff development and the deeper understanding quality assurance. UK 04

No not this particular partner. I've not visited their site. I've met them in Dubai. UK04 SENIOR MANAGEMENT/LEADER

I mean you get to see a whole variety of things. You get to understand the local context. You get to understand the facilities. You get to meet all their staff. You get to meet the students, if they've got students by that point. It's a much richer understanding of are we able to – how much of a commonality from a cultural perspective, from a partnership intent perspective do we have. I think you've got a much stronger sense of establishing that in formal and informal settings that you are able to achieve during some sort of institutional visit. UK04 SENIOR MANAGEMENT/LEADER

That was really about them getting out there, experiencing it, seeing it firsthand so that when we are at that point of resource planning and resource challenges and quality assurance challenges it's not thought of as something in the abstract, but they know the people. UK04 SENIOR MANAGEMENT/LEADER

There is going to be a degree of prioritization which had they not made those trips might have been slightly more challenging UK04 SENIOR MANAGEMENT/LEADER

through a series of staff exchanges allow module leaders to meet each other. UK04 SENIOR MANAGEMENT/LEADER

It's about the depth of connections I think is a key thing UK04 SENIOR MANAGEMENT/LEADER

[visit?] I think so yeah. From an admin point of view it would have been useful to see exactly what they're kind of working with at their end and I think we have done this with other partners, I am not sure if we have ever done it with SLHEI1, but actually, you know, we send academic staff, tutors, out to international partners to kind of impart their knowledge and best practice and deliver staff training. I don't see any reason why experienced administrators from UKHEI couldn't go to a partner and attempt to do the same on the administrative side of things. You know, they may very well get there and find actually they are doing the best they can with what they have and there is not a lot they can do, but if that's the case it certainly wouldn't hurt from a kind of relationship building point of view. I also always thought it was quite important to understand the differences in resources that we have between ourselves and some of the international partners UK 05

it would probably have furthered our understanding a bit if we had gone out there and seen what they were dealing with and I suppose it eases frustration. I think it is all very easy to kind of complain that things have been late or things aren't happening quite as neatly as they should do but actually until you've seen the circumstances your kind of counterpart overseas are dealing with I am not sure you can be too critical.

you can build a really good relationship with people just by e-mail and the odd phone call, but you are always slightly left with the impression they're faceless I suppose because you just never had that kind of face to face sit down, so, you know, for my own personal point of view it would've been nice to go out and sort of sit down with them and, you know, spend some time talking about work but also just, you know, socialising with them a little bit and kind of cementing the relationship I suppose. UK05

helped by bringing people on board and getting them involved. I think you... I don't think you can just tell someone to do it, I think they need to experience it. UK06 ACADEMIC/TNE DEVELOPMENT

if I was going out to do one thing, I wouldn't just go out to meet the partner to do development, I would generally be looking to either do some recruitment for them, helping them to... just because being present there can often make a big difference to how people perceive you, maybe visiting employers or maybe helping with the moderation process depending on the subject area so I would expect to do two or three different things but then the process would also expect to have meetings in terms of development. UK06 ACADEMIC/TNE DEVELOPMENT

[visits to UK] Generally, again a mixture of staff development, seeing our facilities, meeting our academics, having strategy meetings, getting to know people. UK06 Academic/TNE development

there's initial stages of understanding our regulations and... and the fundamentals of the regulations and the processes, but I think there's an ongoing thing where maybe you move from just the basics, unless you've got new members of staff because presumably you bring out new members of staff. You don't bring the same staff out every time and some might go to the libraries, some might go to the robotics lab or something, some may be more interested in their student visits or maybe interested in research so I think you use these visits to consolidate knowledge and understanding of the processes but also to extend the relationship. UK06 Academic/TNE development

We don't pay for them to come here; I'd expect the partner to pay for them to come here. Going out there or to come within our financial budget... our model. UK06 ACADEMIC/TNE DEVELOPMENT

if the financials are that tight then I don't think you've necessarily got the right partner UK06 ACADEMIC/TNE DEVELOPMENT.

Emails. Mainly emails but only once I visited SLHEI1 and spent a week there. It was very useful time because we managed to talk face to face to our colleagues there and moderate the work on paper rather than on the screens, which was painful to the eye. UK06 ACADEMIC/TNE DEVELOPMENT

[visit to UK] I think so, especially if the visit was pre-planned with some specific training sessions which addresses their needs. I think it could be very beneficial for them yes. UK06 ACADEMIC/TNE DEVELOPMENT

when I visited Sri Lanka so that was the first time I was introduced to Dayani and we had spent too many hours talking to each other so it was a good opportunity to establish that relationship. UK06 ACADEMIC/TNE DEVELOPMENT

I found her proficiently sound and knowledgeable in her subjects. So it was very easy to communicate ideas between each other and maybe some misunderstanding took place at certain stage and once she clarified things at her end then it became clearer. UK06 Academic/TNE development

more often it is then about the process of diagnosing what went wrong and for instance, then I could follow that up and when I was out at SLHEI1 then I would go and see – especially because the visits for SLHEI1 were timed to coincide with much of this moderation process – then I could have meetings with the relevant staff, and perhaps present copies of work from UK students and talk about what was required. Uk 08

It sort of grew over time and was definitely solidified by visiting. I think it helped that we were both female. I think it helped that we were both at a certain stage of our careers and had quite similar stages and even personally we were quite sort of similar, so our contact professionally was at least

weekly via email mostly, and very open, honest but I think that's facilitated by our personal relationship UK08

I got out to see them relatively early in my Link Tutorship and that was pivotal and I don't think we go out enough. UK08

in terms of the working relationship I think they should prioritise more the Link Tutor going out more frequently UK08

I think it's the best way to have our ear to the ground UK08

you can't get to know somebody and you don't get the honesty and then you suddenly find that something's been happening that you never knew about and I think the important thing is to have that engagement really early on, UK08

So the Link Tutor obviously is about the day to day basis and it's really interesting how as a Link Tutor you get one reception that's quite kind of "Oh here you are, let's have a chat, have a cup of tea" and then you see when somebody sort of more senior goes in and how they - everything's sort of done for them and I don't like that; I don't really want all of that but it's more ceremonial and especially in those cultures, there is that sense of ceremony. UK08

I very much respect what our partnership institutions are doing and that they are often very progressive for their environment and that actually the people there are often very educated; have industry experience so I think that helped to kind of think of people as your equal and I think it helped to have social interactions UK08

I observed an external examiner for [inaudible 00:30:41] who went out there and he saw it as a jolly and I thought was a little bit rude and a little bit kind of colonial almost; and I do think there are remnants of [ph coloniality 00:31:01] and the whole arrangement. UK08

I do suspect there are things that I knew about that I wouldn't have known about otherwise. I think I knew a lot more about what was going on with the management and about the future of staffing levels and things like that, and who's thinking about moving and who's not. So I think it gave me an informal knowledge that while not – not necessarily something that I could talk officially about to other people at UKHEI, but you could steer things in the right kind of direction. UK08

[Lack of visits here] I think it makes us look a bit stingy and I think it makes it look again like we expect all this stuff without offering opportunities; and so yes I do think we should do more to get – especially the Programme Leaders who then can inspire the rest of the staff. UK08

what's important is how our Module Leaders perceive their partners and that if you can see your partner face to face and talk to them – and I think we should have more opportunity for our Module Leaders to go our partners to teach; to share best practice and I think it would be quite an incentive, if you're a good teacher, to be able to offer the opportunity to travel. UK08

So I felt like I was trying to give them things that would show the students much more clearly how they were linked to UKHEI and the value of this degree. And also that would help remind students that it wasn't just their institution that's awarding them a degree. That's it's not down to just how that tutor marks it, but that there is this extra quality to their degree that's assured by our university and by UKHEI that means more and so makes it worth their money, makes it worth travelling to that place and makes it worth investing in that. UK08

To be honest it would be better if you meet with a person face to face. Because of the distance I think it is fairly enough if you can meet them once or twice a year. But because it's not only me who is visiting so I think other people are visiting. So there is this face to face. But the programme leader there, I think that for some tasks it will be easier to communicate via emails so they don't need me

presence there. But for some other tasks like looking into doing the marking and the moderation it would be better to be physically there. It saves time and also it will shorten my – if there is an issue to be solved. So rather than going through the emails, which sometimes takes days we can sort the problem within hours.UK09

I think to make a process to work really well I think it's important that everybody is understanding between the University of the West of England and the programme leader at SLHEI1. I actually I was hoping that we need to have more frequent contact with them.UK09

I think it would be very beneficial for them to come here to stay with us for a period of time to interact with the department to see how we deliver the lecture and see how we deliver the class. How we set exams, the culture and composite and so on. So I think it will be very beneficial for them.UK09

So we are going there every year so to visit. I think once a year is okay. If it is more than that then it will be better. But it's good in two ways. So somebody go there for once a year – somebody from there could be like the programme leader or it could be one member of staff, a senior member of staff. Who can come here for one year as well. So just for a week also. So this exchange maybe will make us get closer to each other in terms of institution and as well in terms of individuals.UK09

it's always useful to see it for yourself what really is happening and what the relationship is between staff that it's much harder to tell through correspondence and even video conferencing. So I formed an unclear impression of the way things were working in SLHEI1 which is that there is the leader, autocratic leadership who has decided they are going to do certain things in a certain way and really there was a massive drop between what he was doing and the people actually delivering. There was a lack of middle management.UK10 SENIOR MANAGEMENT/LEADER

I think staff exchanges are useful things so getting to actually meet staff maybe their staff coming over and spending a couple of weeks here and seeing how things are and also vice versa.UK10 SENIOR MANAGEMENT/LEADER

It also kind helps kind of foster ideas that the people you are working with are human beings, they have their own needs and they work within a context. I think sometimes when you visit a partner, looking through my experience in the past; you get to understand what drives people, motivate them and understand the reality once they operate.UK11 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

because I really do feel that physical visits are when you really begin to truly understand how a partnership works so earlier on when you get there, you sit round a table, you look at people in the whites of their eyes, you understand the landscape, you understand little things like how far they commute and how long their day is, who their kids are, what their life is.UK11 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

So I think it is cultural that we use English in a different way. I don't think it's impossible to overcome. Like I say, I'm in a lucky position in our team that I've met many people face to face and if you meet someone face to face and talk to them, you can pick up better on how they use English than if you only have ever met that person by email. It's just being able to do that I think makes it a bit easier to work with someone.UK12 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

I've been to SLHEI1 twice, once for a period of about a week and another time for just a couple of days. I think those visits were helpful at the time. I think they were possibly too late in the sense that things had already started and had started to go wrong. I think they needed to be done earlier. UK12 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

I wasn't there [inbound visit from registrar SLHEI1] but I don't feel that it really made a massive difference, she didn't go away going, 'I could do this, I could do that, this would be great, why don't I

put this process in place or do this,' or, 'They've got a student records system, why don't I push my boss to get one instead of throwing my paperwork in a corner of the room?' It didn't feel like she went back feeling inspired to make a change. UK12 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

I think once you get to know someone a little bit, like we're always keen for people to introduce themselves as soon as possible and start trying to get to know people, as much as you can by email, but yeah to kind of do that, to learn a little bit about the people they're working with, as soon as they can so that we can start to make those [inaudible 00:36:43] in the way they communicate if you like. UK12 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

So it would be difficult for me to say, I want to send all of my team across. I think when they go, yes it would be a kind of cultural visit and a cultural exchange and you'd get more of it that way, but when it came to kind of being able to make decisions, to have conversations with the partners about making changes and improvements and them thinking, well why are you here if we can't do this, I don't think that they're at that level of responsibility in their roles to be able to do it. I would worry that I'd be setting them up to maybe knock their confidence or, yeah put them in a position where they felt uncomfortable doing that. UK12 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Culture and TNE

the cultural differences of the students. That the students behave in a different way to our students, so when you put in a programme here, we have very different relationships in terms of two way communication and the formality of it. It's much more informal here with collegiate whereas it's more teachers and the taught in SLHEI1; although many Module Leaders were very friendly with their students and knew them very well, it still had that kind of more hierarchical teacher/school-ish feel that it does here. UK08

They infer that they're merely there to deliver exactly what that Module Leader puts in place, so that therefore disables the partner from updating examples to making them locally relevant and to adapting it. UK08

things like assuming the people you're talking to don't speak very good English. UK08

an assumption that their background, their educational background of their partners is not so good and that yeah, I think there are a lot of assumptions and they didn't really need to try and find out anything about the people they're working with. UK08

the cultural differences of the students. That the students behave in a different way to our students, so when you put in a programme here, we have very different relationships in terms of two way communication and the formality of it. It's much more informal here with collegiate whereas it's more teachers and the taught in SLHEI1; although many Module Leaders were very friendly with their students and knew them very well, it still had that kind of more hierarchical teacher/school-ish feel that it does here. UWE08

I think in the UK it is like the cycle will always feedback and may ensure that improvements are done. But whereas in since Sri Lanka even in the state sector universities we collect the feedback from the students, and then they summarise it and give it to the lecturers, but er nothing much (laughs) really happens I think even if it is a peer review in the state sector of university it is either your student or your teacher. SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS ADMINISTRATOR

So in Sri Lanka due to the cultural factors people will really not say anything bad about him, I mean in the context of doing a peer review, so that way I don't think the quality is that much maintained in those universities. And again although the students might say certain things it is very rare that those things are implemented, but whereas if you are doing a partnership programme like in Sri Lanka when the students write something, we also feed that to the UKHEI the partner institute, so they might ask

whether you've been able to implement these things. SL13 SENIOR ACADEMIC AND PROGRAMME LEADER, NS ADMINISTRATOR

In the state universities the staff are always discussing, the top people always discussing to protect their system, their education system from that corruption. So that is a good conversation and discussion in Sri Lankan education system, as I know. So they always think in state university but I think that it's good if the private unis in Sri Lanka, all private unis, can make that kind of forum and discussion, say, as an example and if they can meet and then discuss maintaining the quality because UKHEI people they don't have good experience or good knowledge of the Sri Lankan culture so...SL07 ACADEMIC, NS

Culturally there are some barriers to achieving that in terms of some administrators not feeling that they might be able to talk openly and honestly with us about things that are happening because it might be a different culture where they are that perhaps that's not appropriate. UK02 SENIOR PROFESSION SERVICES

I think we've had an issue with our team of really trying to – and some administrators have been more effective at this than others, of trying to encourage the team to be quite succinct in their email communications because I think that's a challenging time. UK02 SENIOR PROFESSION SERVICES

Some of our team members have had a habit of writing quite long involved emails feeling that they are trying to build a working relationship, and that's a good way of doing it because it's not a factual email it's more of a here is some background, here is some context. Actually one of the things that is the cultural thing that we're really encouraging our team is to try to be much clearer in their email communications and to not worry so much about the niceties, whilst perhaps include those to a level, but also be very clear on what we're actually asking the partner to do. I think that's something that we can be better at as a team and were working with the team on, because some are really good at it. UK02 SENIOR PROFESSION SERVICES

It's the team recognizing that some of the people we're dealing with English isn't necessarily their first language. We think that perhaps we have a norm of communicating, how I might communicate with somebody here, I say here as in within the UK, in an email. Actually there is a cultural thing there, it's all about communications, of email style I think is one of the things that I would say is sometimes a challenge. UK02 SENIOR PROFESSION SERVICES

it was always described as a bit of a cultural divide perhaps, that institutions in Sri Lanka might be slightly more laid back as far as standards were concerned. I never really got that impression, because I suppose what we were asking them to do in essence was fairly simple. UK05

I do think maybe you know we have had the benefit in this country of being able to create lots of legislation and lots of bureaucracy which has kind of given us a framework to work from whereas in Sri Lanka they, I imagine, haven't been afforded that luxury because it's a country that's been you know fighting a civil war up until very recently so it wouldn't surprise me if the attitude was different but I think rather an attitude perception there is probably more realism that perhaps result in us having that perception that they don't take the standards quite as seriously as we do. UK05

I think also what I picked up in terms of working with the registrar, [name] is that I think she's pretty much a one-woman show in terms of what she does but I think the administrative culture there is very much just pass all this to her to deal with and then it comes out. UK01

It's just that maybe some of their processes and the way that they work caused us challenge and were frustrating for us at times. UK02 SENIOR PROFESSION SERVICES

lot of people referred to it as cultural differences but actually I didn't necessarily see it as a question of culture. I think it always struck me as just a question of circumstance more than culture, you know,

I kind of got on with everyone well there. From my own administrative point of view I always found them fairly easy to understand and to get along with. I have always had really cordial meetings with them and so all the communication I did was generally very easy to understand. I think where there were occasional issues and misunderstanding those tended to centre around UKHEI's regulations and our sort of higher education regulations, but I don't think it was due to culture I just think it was perhaps due to... due to language mainly. UK05

lot of people in institution here will base their judgements on the understanding of UK behaviours and culture and they sort of transfer that across; we assume it's going to work the way we think it's going to work and we take it to another culture and then we're surprised when it doesn't UK06

ACADEMIC/TNE DEVELOPMENT

I think we have historically had a bit of a... slightly colonial approach to our education that we have got something that we are going to do some good for these people, it's not a charity it's a business you know. I think there is sometimes a tendency, particularly if people haven't met these other people to... to judge them because they're only running a diploma instead of a degree. UK06

ACADEMIC/TNE DEVELOPMENT

I have to be critical here, what I have noticed that some of our module leaders they look down at their counterparts at SLHEI1 as if they are not to the same standard. We have, my view, we have to look at them as equals and maybe we are privileged that we have received some training which they haven't received yet so we have to take that into consideration when we handle their work, but we shouldn't at all look down at them that we are better. No we are not. In fact from the quality of... or the standard of assessment the questions and course work they set for their students, I personally learned from it sometimes. Sometimes I borrow some of their course sheets. UK07

I think my issues were effectively down to people who were inexperienced on an academic level which was causing a lot of the issues that I encountered, and I think that was just something is really down to time and staff training rather than anything I would say were cultural issues. UK01

Sometimes yes, this is from my personal experience but countries like Sri Lanka after A Levels there are many students if they have studied another native language they're not good in English, so the moment you enter a transnational education system everything is automated, like you get to use the computer, and it's all in English, presentation, and they don't give you language training because in higher education you are supposed to know the basics like in my university like when I studying for the London graduate there were so many students like knowledge wise they're ok but they had problems in conversing and communicating so finally ended up getting somewhere around third class degree or general pass. SL8 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS

Some students, yes, because some students have studied in Sinhalese medium up to their advance level so sometimes they have the trouble here we actually give them some support as in rather than being totally distant like a lecturer and a student they are more close to us, there are students who are actually do come and tell us like we have trouble in understanding and in my last semester I had taken separate classes for them to explain it again for the weak students. SL8 ACADEMIC, LECTURER, NS

I think it seems to me that she [senior administrator] needs a lot more focused support and I think where we have two organisations of very different size, that it would be advantageous for them to have maybe a couple of people working very, very closely in terms of the partnership and that could be maybe the focal point of what they do to take some of the pressure off her, where obviously we have whole teams. UK01

When we've got an issue where we've got a major board coming up with the partnerships team, we've got multiple colleagues who can pitch in and help do stuff and actually take over and we all

know the kind of work we're doing and how that actually pans out in the end and what we're looking for with it. I don't know if SLHEI have that. I think it's very much down to her and that's a lot of pressure to put on one person I think. UK01

another side of it which I think was civil engineering, which was a little bit more not as responsive and I think the difference is we had, for software engineering, electronic engineering, had the one person in each team who really had everything they were dealing with and very responsive, whereas on the other side it was much more fragmented and there wasn't as quite a sense of ownership perhaps on there. UK01

I think on the UKHEI side, again, there's pros and cons in terms of that and I think some programme structures worked better than others but again my concern is also at what cost in terms of workload for staff and so on? UK01

I don't think there is anything accept, I don't know if I'm allowed to say, one of the papers were leaked to student. It will never happen here. I've been in the job for more than fifteen years and I've never heard about any exam papers or whatever to be leaked to the students Even here if you have a grievance against your institution I think from part of the culture it's impossible for somebody to do this. UK09

One of the other things that could be part of the teaching culture of the country, but mainly the way of teaching of setting deadlines and so on. But sometimes in terms of marking and grading the papers. They are not in line with what was said in the brief. So the students are expecting something based on what is in the brief and then when they do the marking they do it in a different way. So we have to work – I don't know if it is part of the culture or it was like that... UK09

In Sri Lanka that [student representation] is clearly not an expectation. They are not seeing the students in any way as being part of that process and although we had tried to get them to engage with the idea of student forums. Student staff rep forums, having student reps and student rep councils; it was not a strong movement for them. The leadership didn't see that that could bring any benefit to them and viewed the students as rather an irritant in the system..... I think it's a cultural thing, yes that they were not expecting that the students should have any voice in their education and that's not really how we perceive things do we? I suspect in Oman it's also slightly culturally challenging for them to give the students any voice at all on what they are doing but they were making quite an effort to do so and have a student council. UK10 SENIOR MANAGEMENT/LEADER

I think it's the way we use the English language differently in different countries and the way we structure our sentences can be different. You know, just the way we break down sentences. If we use long sentences with lots of different explanations buried within that, I think it's difficult for [inaudible 00:26:31] to interpret what we're saying. UK12 SENIOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

